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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

JANUARY 1950

No. 1

Pie-Crust and Resolutions

We sometimes say that resolutions are like pie-crust because they are easily broken. It is no part of the business of this Editor to play the moralist; but he may be permitted to observe that conviction is the passage to will and that we break our resolutions so very often because we are not convinced, consciously and un-consciously, of the reasons which underlie our resolutions.

There is no doubt, that at the beginning of last year, many of our readers resolved to become members of The Catholic Film Institute and "meant" to introduce **Focus** to their friends (and non-friends, in order to change them into friends) but somehow they didn't, and they didn't, because their minds were not properly "made-up", they were not convinced of the importance and the necessity of The Apostolate of the Cinema.

The Catholic Film Institute has received a large measure of sympathy and support from clergy and laity at home and abroad and **Focus** has been spoken of by all sorts of people in most generous language, yet (and it is not ungenerous to say this) the Institute hasn't the support it needs for the reason that few Catholics are **convinced** of the spiritual, moral and psychological power of the Cinema. However, we are optimistic enough to believe that Douglas Hyde's article on Communism and the Cinema will convince many readers that they have been sleeping while the enemy has been sowing and reaping.

The beginning of this, the Holy Year, is a suitable time to **CONVINCE** ourselves that the Cinema can play, and must play, an important part in making the world safe for Christianity. EDITOR.

Communism and the Cinema

By DOUGLAS HYDE

In the winter of 1931, I travelled up to London from the Provinces in order to join up with the contingents of hunger marchers who had come to the capital from all the main industrial centres.

The Invergordon Mutiny had made Communists in Britain talk more hopefully of the possibilities for Communism in Britain than they had dared even dream of before.

Supposing other sections of the Navy should mutiny too? Supposing the police, who had come under the economy axe, should follow suit?

When the "workers in uniform" revolted, the unemployed would soon join forces with them. The great thing was to spread a mood of revolt.

After a big Hyde Park demonstration, in which there were fierce fights between unemployed and police, the news was put around that an important film was to be shown in a room above a Central London pub.

With a few sailors and a great many unemployed I went along. The film was a 16mm. silent, *Battleship Potemkin*. Its story was of the mutiny of the Tsarist Russian Navy in the abortive revolution of 1905.

At that moment men were being sent to jail for making speeches designed to extend the Invergordon Mutiny, yet that little film preached, under the circumstances then prevailing, more sedition than any speech for which our members were being imprisoned.

Its message got right home and, before it had run its course, had the audience, who fully appreciated its significance, right on their toes.

The thing to note about it is that it was not simply the aptness of the moment of its showing which achieved this. It was the technical perfection of the film itself, for it had been produced by that master of the Soviet propaganda film, Eisenstein, who is reputed to have done so much to give Chaplin his left-wing leanings.

It was in *Battleship Potemkin* that Eisenstein first experimented with photographing a panic-stricken crowd streaming down a wide flight of stone steps—towards the camera and death. Those shots alone were calculated to send out everyone present more of a revolutionary than when he came in.

Russia early saw the possibilities of the small propaganda film and set up a department in the '20s linked with the Communist International, to specialise upon the work.

The public was less accustomed to 16mm. films then even than they are today and it was recognised that, if the public other than the already-converted were to take to them, they must be well done.

The small film was, of course, not only suitable for showing in improvised halls in those days when no cinema would accept anything remotely smelling of Communist propaganda, it was ideal for showing illegally too.

In every European country was set up a Communist film organisation to be the "receiving end" of the Moscow organisation. It was found, in practice, that the propaganda worked in two ways: not only through the obvious medium of the screen, but also by attracting people, not necessarily Communists at all, interested in cinematography.

By the time that the Spanish Civil War had begun the British organisation was well into its stride. Not only was it receiving and showing Soviet films, but actually making them as well. Kino, as it was called, had become more than a film-showing organisation, it was a movement, organising a large number of people stretching from the mildest of co-operators who liked to brighten up an otherwise dull co-operative society's quarterly meeting with a film (albeit with a Communist message), to open and well-known Communists.

When I became Welsh National Organiser of Spanish Medical Aid (I

happened to be in North Wales at the time) and responsible for the organisation of a great succession of money-raising and propaganda meetings, the first thing I did was to hire the 16mm. film *Defence of Madrid*. It had been made under first by the Hon. Ivor Montagu, now a producer at Ealing, and a leading Communist Party member.

That film—100 per cent propaganda for the anti-Franco cause—give me the entry to places and circles who would otherwise not have crossed the road to attend a Communist-inspired meeting.

I took it to practically every town and village in North and Mid Wales—and took its message and mine with it.

I showed it so often, and hired the machine so often, too, that in the end I bought both an Ensign 16mm. machine and a copy of the film outright to save money.

I remember showing it at a little inland village on Anglesey where no film had ever been shown before. And many of those present had never in their lives "been to the pictures". The impact, quite naturally, upon their minds was considerable and I made converts to the cause in the most unlikely places.

On more than one occasion I had to connect up to the local garage's private power plant or even to the one at "the big house" of the village, running a quarter of a mile of flex along the roadside to do it.

Later a sound film was made which was also widely shown although, of course, not on the scale of the simpler silent one.

The good Communist is always "apostolic". And he knows, and has known for years, the importance of the film in his "apostolate".

But the party and the organisations it created for the work, always insisted upon films being of the highest possible quality.

We knew that there was widespread prejudice against us, which had to be broken down if ever we were to become a mass party.

We knew, too, that people with such prejudices would not be in a frame of mind where they would be impressed by a film for which it was necessary to apologise.

The faithful few would tolerate

anything provided only that the message was right. But it was the others we were after.

One almost unforeseen result of the party's activities in film making and distributing was to produce in time a number of people, Communists and their sympathisers, qualified to work professionally in films and the consequences of that upon the industry and so upon the public as a whole may have been almost as important as those which resulted from the showing of the films themselves.

An exactly similar but even more far-reaching development occurred as a result of the party's creation and cultivation of Unity Theatre, which has not only influenced hundreds of thousands who have seen its shows but has, in recent years, maintained a steady and quite considerable outflow of its one-time amateurs on to the West End stage where they have made the Communist party a force to be reckoned with among actors.

KINO, as is the way with the party's organisations, changed its name from time to time and changed its personnel as well. But it remained substantially the same in aim and method right up to the commencement of the war.

When the Soviet Union attacked Finland and feeling was running high against the party it was the 16mm. film which was used to break down some of that feeling by depicting the Red Army as conducting a heroic campaign against adverse physical and climatic conditions.

But when the Nazi attack on Russia came and with it widespread support for the U.S.S.R. and, to some extent for British Communists as well, the 16mm. film was largely dropped in the larger cities and its use confined to the smaller towns.

For the first time there were opportunities for getting Soviet films shown under normal cinema conditions. The Communists are not likely to use the second best if the best is obtainable and, useful as they had been and still were under certain conditions, the sub-standard films were dropped wherever cinemas could be prevailed upon to show the "real thing".

Biggest success in this direction was when the Tatler in West London was

prevailed upon to switch over almost exclusively to Soviet films for exhibition to the ordinary cinema-going public, a position it maintained for some years.

That Tatler episode was seen by the Communist Party as being one of its biggest successes in the film world, reflecting the position and influence it had been able to achieve in film circles through the early work of KINO and the other Communist film organisations.

The influence of Communists today in the film industry is immeasurably

stronger than it could possibly have been had the party not seen the importance of the film as a vehicle of propaganda and for moulding ideas. And, because it attracted around its film organisations a body of sympathisers whose primary interest was at first in films and film making, but from whom it was able to win many converts, the party has today a formidable hold in the trade unions catering for film workers, technicians and others.

THE ATOM AND YOU

There are still a number of intelligent people who regard the cinema as wholly evil. Such persons are surprised to read these words of Pope Pius XI: "Good motion pictures are capable of exerting a profoundly moral influence on those who see them . . . They create or at least favour understanding among nations, social classes and races . . ." They are able "to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world".

Fired with sentiments such as these, a group, under the inspiration of Andrew Buchanan, has come together, with the object of serving humanity by means of the film. It calls itself "Film for Humanity" and is comprised of members of several organisations such as the Catholic Film Institute, the Society of Friends, Humanity Now, etc.

"Films for Humanity" plans to produce and encourage the distribution of films in a twofold stream. First, films which are made by or on behalf of any of the component organisations of the group will in so far as they express sentiments in accordance with the aims of "Films for Humanity", have the benefit of the encouragement of the group as a whole. Second, films which will be produced by "Films for Humanity" for distribution by and on behalf of the component organisations.

Of this second group is the first film to be made by "Films for Humanity". It is called *The Atom and You* and is a powerful plea by a well-known American scientist for the positive use of atomic energy. Dr. Daniel Posin is one of those who, having taken part in the researches which helped to perfect the ghastly weapon which slew hundreds of thousands in a single horrible blast at Hiroshima, resigned from his post in order to devote himself to a world-wide mission of mercy. He pleads for the release of atomic energy for medicine and other humanitarian needs. He has developed a dramatic demonstration-lecture in which, by means of voice, gesture and considerable acting ability, he makes his audience share something of the horror of the destruction and sufferings wrought by the explosion of the atom bomb. He is able also to induce us to share his optimism.

The Atom and You, as a film, has its limitations, but it achieves its simple purpose of capturing for a wider audience the message and method of Dr. Daniel Posin in a singularly graphic manner. The film is available in 16mm. from the Catholic Film Institute library. It is two reels, monochrome, and costs one guinea plus postage to hire.

J. A. V. B.

FILM GLOSSARY

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 12

FILM AND THE CHILD

It is generally agreed that the two most important developments in the history of film during recent years were the coming of Sound, and Colour. I suggest a third development of equal importance is marked by the production of films especially for children—there being greater significance in this work than some of us realise.

Insofar as this country is concerned, films for children are even younger than the audiences, but already they have established themselves. These productions are designed to create a true sense of values; to develop vision, and to acquaint children with life in other countries as it really is and not as misrepresented by conflicting governments.

In brief, films for the young entertain and inform in quite a different way to programmes made for adult consumption. Unfortunately, there are not sufficient children's films or children's cinemas to divert youngsters from the shows for adults which they frequent so regularly to see "U" films un-

attended, and "A" films when accompanied by adults—the latter law being one of the greatest mistakes of all time.

The historian of the future will list down all the extravagant educational and child welfare plans we have evolved for the dear children, and he will then note we permit and even encourage them to feed regularly on cinema programmes made for adults! Occasionally, a "family" film appears which can do no harm to children even if it does them little good, but the majority of adult films are entirely unsuitable for the young and do incalculable harm.

Films do not have to be vicious, questionable or sensational to be unsuitable. The nice ones were *not* made for children and do not present stories they should witness. The fact that thousands of kiddies revel in adult programmes is the result of filmdom having discovered the secret of appealing to everyone from first to second childhood, thus turning children into adults and adults

into children, which, commercially, is excellent, but spiritually, not so good.

Recently, I was planning a classroom film, and the question arose of making it also suitable for adults. I thought this would necessitate two versions, but an educationalist said that if the film was made suitable for children of thirteen, it would be exactly right for every adult! Unlucky number, thirteen.

These facts help us to see just how important are the children's films, and what an immense task confronts their producers, who have to make more and more films especially for the young, sufficiently attractive to draw them away from the adult pro-

grammes which have become an integral part of their young lives.

Whatever one may think of Russia's political structure, it is worth noting that production and exhibition of children's films there is highly and successfully developed and that no children under 16 are permitted into cinemas showing adult films. (This was so a few years ago, and I believe is still the rule.)

Anyone who has seen an habitual young cinemagoer, overflowing with superficial sophistication, who has lost the freshness and simplicity of childhood in the darkness of the cinema, will want to see the production of children's films increase as rapidly as possible for the sake of the future.

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FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

WHITE HEAT

Starring: James Cagney, Virginia Mayo, with Edmond O'Brien, Fred Clark. **Director:** Raoul Walsh. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 110 minutes.

The march of crime.

There seems to have been a certain amount of nervousness about the reactions to be expected from this reversion to the gangster type of picture. So the publicity quotes James Cagney as saying that hoodlums remain the same dumb braggarts, while crime prevention and detection methods advance along with science, and stresses that in real life Virginia Mayo takes a great interest in Presbyterian Sunday Schools.

Talking of Sunday Schools reminds me that it was immediately after Mr. Rank's depressing disclosures that this film was first shown in this country. Hollywood, it seems, can set him an example of economy. Adroit location work and ingeniously inexpensive use of studio stages have not prevented *White Heat* from being described as spectacular.

Perhaps I am the wrong person to review this film, because when I was young I shouldn't have wanted to steal and murder any more after seeing it than before. But I gather from experts in juvenile delinquency that its effect upon some people would be to make them go straight home and shoot their mother in the back.

To me, somehow, the whole thing seemed to have no more connection with reality than does a detective novel. I followed the story with a detached and intellectual interest in the working out of events.

There were some inimitable Cagney

touches. (The neatness of his way of dealing with tiresome blondes has an irresistible appeal for the unchivalrous.) Margaret Wycherly gave to the part of his mother an almost Barrymore flavour. Crime marches on.

Q.

HOUNDED

Starring: George Raft, with Nina Foch and George Macready. **Director:** Ted Tetzlaff. **Producer:** Irving Starr. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

A sophisticated florist, Johnny Allegro (George Raft), with a criminal past but a good war record, helps a glamorous blonde (Nina Foch) and becomes involved with high government interests which he agrees to serve, even though this means double-crossing her. She has a fantastical husband, Morgan Vallin (George Macready), who is in a counterfeit money racket with international political strings to it. He lives in his island hide-out and, more than incidentally, believes in bows and arrows, being a little mad. So we have once again the familiar but never convincing figure of the stalking archer roaming the island for his human quarry. Meanwhile illicit love has been offered and nobly declined, but the villain's crash to death and the government's rewarding approval of the quasi-hero will surely lead to the happy ever after when the story ends.

I cannot call this a fine film. There is a deal of violence in it which only seems to make up for a lack of coherence in the plot. Sometimes, the audience had a laugh when none was intended—which I take to be a bad sign.

X.

THE GREAT LOVER

Starring: Bob Hope and Rhonda Fleming, with Roland Young, Roland Culver and Richard Lyon. **A** Paramount Picture.
Director: Alexander Hall.
Certificate: *A.* **Category:** *B.*
Running time: 80 minutes.

Bob Hope is a comedian. It is his business to make people laugh. People will laugh at most things if the comedian is clever enough. But even a good comedian can only use what the script writer gives him to work on. In the present case both have run short of genuine humour and fun and Bob is reduced to raising sniggers by suggestive references and innuendoes. As the unwilling guardian of seven American-type Boy Scouts, he runs into trouble in the shape of card sharpers and impecunious Russian Grand Dukes and Duchesses. I find this kind of thing peculiarly repugnant. Excellent studies from the two English Rolands do not retrieve the film from mediocrity.

V.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

(Based on the book by Dostoevsky)

Starring: Hampe Faustmann, Gunn Wallgren and Sigurd Wallen.
Director: Hampe Faustman.
Producer: Lorens Marmstedt. **A** Swedish Film. **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd. **Certificate:** *A.* **Category:** *A.* **Running time:** 80 minutes.

No one will go to see a film based on Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" for a picnic. No one could contemplate with pleasure his picture of the nihilistic life of the Russia of pre-Revolution days. The tragic theme is presented in the film with unrelieved gloom. Had the film achieved the level of a work of art, that would have been pleasant relief indeed.

For us it suffered considerably because the spoken word was Swedish and we had to rely entirely on inadequately provided sub-titles. We could not so much as guess the trend of conversation.

With such a disadvantage we needed first-rate acting and good photography to make this film bearable. We got

neither. With the notable exception of Zametov (Sigurd Wallen), the magistrate, we do not meet real people at all. His duplicity, cunning and charm made his individual performance outstanding in contrast to the rest of the characters who were no more than types. Rasolnikov (Hampe Faustman) was not a student as he was supposed to be, but just a walking, talking and heavily breathing neurotic. His mother, brother and sister were mask-like attitudes, but not people, and Sonia (Gunn Wallgren), though pleasantly far-removed from American stardom, was also far from being a real human being.

The photography was mostly indistinct. The economy of light was intended, no doubt, to deepen the prevailing gloom, but it was overdone. Praise must be given for the sets which were simple and realistic, and admirable restraint was shown even when there might have been a temptation to be more grandiose.

Praise cannot be meted out for the sound-track, however. The orchestral background did not seem to bear any relation to what we were seeing, and more than once I thought it was a radio in a neighbouring building and wished someone would turn it off. The choral background to the funeral was singularly inappropriate, and was painfully like the singers who used to render the hymns in the "Lift up Your Hearts" programme of the B.B.C. in the bad old days before they were substituted for orchestral excerpts. Why this sort of background for a Russian Orthodox funeral?

We cannot say that this is in any way an immoral film. The murder of the pawnbroker by the student is in no way condoned. His motive—a very insufficient one indeed—is that he thinks the world would be a better place if it be rid of "this louse", and he imagines that such a "good" act will leave behind no remorse. Having done the deed, he realises and is haunted by his guilt and it is only finally, after persuasion from Sonia, the prostitute, that he finds relief of mind by confessing his crime to the police and accepting the punishment due, namely, deportation to Siberia.

There are other points that were worth saying: that prostitutes can have a good side to them, can work un-

selfishly and even sell themselves from a genuine love of a worthless and drunken father; that they can, even while committing sin, retain a deep faith in God—and Sonia's was deep; that a murderer is capable of doing a generous deed and may resist the grosser temptations of the flesh; that peace of mind can only come when guilt is admitted and confessed; that the respectable are capable of wicked injustice and cruelty.

But since you know these things already, you may spare yourself being harrowed by this film.

G.

A STRANGER WALKED IN

Starring: John Hodiak, Sylvia Sidney, Ann Richards, with John Howard, Isobel Elsom. **Producer:** James J. Geller. **Director:** Richard Whorf. A Renown Hollywood Production. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 81 minutes.*

What with other work and making a retreat I was quite a stranger when I walked into the cinema. And the names of Frank Vosper and Agatha Christie among the technical credits led me to look forward to an enjoyable thriller.

The film was described as "suspense drama". But from the first moment that the criminal appeared, he seemed to spare no pains, short of reading the Wife-Murderer's Handbook, to make it obvious not only to the audience but to his wife that he was a notorious wife-murderer. A police notice said he had fair hair, but might have died it. So he brings out a bottle of dye. And so on. And so forth. For one wild moment I thought perhaps he wasn't the criminal after all and we had been rather cleverly led up the garden. Alas, no.

When he started digging a grave in the cellar, after telling his wife on no account to go down there, a lady behind me whispered: "I suppose he's going to do her in". But I had been to the pictures before and knew that villains don't murder leading ladies. And though he eluded the handcuffs—Scotland Yard being nearly as dumb as his wife—he got in the way of a carrier's dray and his wife-murdering career was done.

Most of this goes on in Devonshire in

1901. So stage rustics group themselves about and talk in the American idea of dialect, in which Somerset and Yorkshire get hideously intertwined.

Crude.

Q.

THE COUNTESS OF MONTE CRISTO

Starring: Sonja Henie, Michael Kirby, Olga San Juan, Dorothy Hart, Arthur Treacher. **Producer:** John Beck. **Director:** Frederick de Cordova. **Distributors:** Eros Films. *Certificate: U. Category: A. Running time: 75 minutes.*

At what point does a perfume become a stink? There is a stage at which it can be called either according to taste. So too with this film.

Sonja Henie, determined to have a brief period of gaiety no matter what the consequences, steals a car and presents herself at a fashionable hotel in Sweden as the Countess of Monte Cristo. She has many anxious moments but in the end escapes disagreeable consequences unscathed.

The perfume is the expert skating, beautiful settings and touches of humour. The bad smell is the amoral nature of the whole proceeding.

The gaiety is often forced. By any standard it is not a very accomplished film.

T.

THAT MIDNIGHT KISS

Starring: Kathryn Grayson, Jose Iturbi, Ethel Barrymore and Mario Lanza. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Director:** Norman Taurog. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 98 minutes.*

A Romeo who brings his troupe of instrumentalists to accompany his midnight serenading of a Juliet whose battleaxe of a grandmother keeps watch from a nearby window is definitely not the type of Don Juan a stupid title might lead one to expect. In fact those who care for Tchaikowski's more soulful tunes tricked out as opera will find this film a not unpleasant musical, with the accent on music. Mario Lanza is a new and good-looking tenor who will inevitably waste a beautiful voice singing for Leo the Lion. Pity!

V.

COME TO THE STABLE

Starring: Loretta Young and Celeste Holm, with Hugh Marlowe, Elsa Lanchester, Thomas Gomez.
Presented by 20th Century-Fox.
Director: Henry Koster.
Producer: Samuel G. Engel.
Certificate: U. **Category:** C.
Running time: 95 minutes.

Fog prevented my attending the Press Show, but the courtesy of the management of the Leicester Square Odeon allowed me to see the film a few days later, late enough for me to be already armed with the published views of the critics. Some of these seem to be concerned about what they call the bad taste of "making fun about nuns". One can appreciate the kindly and, indeed, chivalrous instincts of critics whose idea of nuns is that they exist in an atmosphere of sadness and dignity. I hope I am not myself in danger of irreverence when I find I am not horrified at a nun driving a jeep with

bravura. Nor am I surprised at the shrewd unworldliness which we all know to be the greatest and most fruitful asset of the race of dedicated women.

Sister Margaret (Loretta Young) and Sister Scholastica (Celeste Holm) come from France uninvited but with some kind of permission to try and induce some American bishop to allow them to found a hospital in fulfilment of a vow they had inexplicably been allowed to make. They descend, penniless but full of childlike and expert faith, upon the Biblically named parts of New England and make their abode, willy nilly, as far as she is concerned, with a delightful, eccentric, religious artist called Miss Potts. This character is played so very tenderly by Elsa Lanchester.

By their simple assurance that everyone wishes to help them they overcome the responsible caution of the Bishop (Basil Ruysdael), enlist some initial help from a nearby composer (Hugh Marlowe) and his coloured servant (Dooley Wilson), charm money and land



The Sisters talk business . . .

from a disreputable character called Luigi Rossi (Thomas Gomez); and finally, after some anxious moments with a series of setbacks, they get their hospital on the way to realisation.

It is true that there are improbabilities in the story, some of them ecclesiastical. But as for making fun of nuns, I just cannot see it. For us of the household of the Faith, anyway, there are plenty of laughs, but then they may be proprietary. The high-powered simplicity of the nuns gets the laugh over the astute boys. So far from making fun of nuns it may be that the fun is extracted from the non-nuns.

I think the title of the film is a pity.

One thinks automatically of a Nativity Play and, naturally, even a well intended and healthy entertainment such as this suffers from the change in mental temperature.

Although both Miss Young and Miss Holm give sympathetic performances, it must be remembered that it is no more than their own observation of the externals of nuns that they can be expected to follow. Whether real nuns would react in their way to these fantastic crises is a matter of opinion. My guess is as good as yours.

But I did very much enjoy the film—in spite of this ghastly Hollywood convention of celestial music. X.

Elsa Lanchester gives a distinguished performance of Miss Potts, a lovable but somewhat eccentric artist





Pinky agrees to nurse Miss Em



Negro recognises Negro



Accepted by her own . . .

PINKY

Starring: Jeanne Crain, Ethel Barrymore, Ethel Waters and William Lundigan. A 20th Century-Fox Picture. **Director:** Elia Kazan. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

When a producer makes a film which sabotages the Decalogue it is customary to describe it as "daring". The correct word is "unscrupulous". When a film is made which upholds the common decencies of Christian Charity and Social Justice it is the fashion to use the word "courageous". Surely, the right word is "honest".

It is a sad commentary on the state of our civilisation that either of these words is deemed necessary in such a context. The fact is that it needs courage to declare that, whatever our colour or race, whether we admit descent from Abraham or Brian Boru, we are all God's children. Further, it is now forgotten that any fool can break the Ten Commandments: that it requires fortitude to live a life of integrity.

Twentieth Century-Fox deserve our gratitude for making films like *Gentleman's Agreement* and *Pinky*. We cannot blame them that they do no more than state the problems. It would require real courage, in view of vested interests, to state the remedies unequivocally. Christianity is not popular in spite of the commercial success of films like *Bells of St. Mary's* or *Going My Way*. We are, therefore, at least glad to find the facts of anti-semitism in *Gentleman's Agreement* and colour prejudice in *Pinky*, put so plainly.

Though we are not so face to face with the problem in this country as they are in America, it cannot be said that we are without fault in our attitude to human beings whose skin is darker than our own. I remember a titled lady who told me that she never allowed her coloured servants in Africa to have a saucer as well as a cup, lest it should "put ideas into their heads".

When we see *Pinky*, a "white negress", being insulted by white men because of her race, being made to take second place in the general store

because she is not white, being advised to give up her just claims to property lest it inflame white prejudice against her race, it is as well to let our indignation cool to reflect that there are many people in this country who hate Jews because they are Jews, and look down on coloured folk because "they are not like us".

Here is an example of the cinema being used "to favour understanding among nations, social classes and races" (Pius XI) and as such we welcome it. The fact that it is an excellent piece of film craft, well written, well directed and well acted only makes our duty in seeing such films all the more pleasurable.

Jeanne Crain gives the best performance of her career as Pinky; Ethel Barrymore as a tyrannical old landowner with a soft spot for Pinky, and Ethel Waters as Pinky's coloured grandmother are superb.

V.

TELL IT TO THE JUDGE

Starring: Rosalind Russell and Robert Cummings. **Producer:** Buddy Adler. **Director:** Norman Foster.
Certificate: A. *Category:* B.
Running time: 87 minutes.

Humour is a funny thing answered the schoolboy. It is! It is a very individual thing, also. So much so that one man's joke is another man's poison. For my part the Marx brothers make me laugh till I cry (I could harp on Harpo for hours; for he is my favourite who often flashes upon my inward eye and makes all the world look glad). I can get a lot from the humour of Danny Kaye and Paul Douglas and Linda Darnell in *Everybody Does It*, (the best humorous film of the year?), delighted me; but Abbott and Costello and Laurel and Hardy and the pie-throwing comedians give me little merriment. The film under review (to me) belongs to the comic-cut school of humour and I venture to suggest that but for the face of Rosalind Russell and her excellent acting there would have been little to it.

E.



The Doctor prescribes . . .



Pinky with her boy-friend



Pinky pleads her cause

*The
Command
Performance
Film*

Greer Garson and Errol
Flynn, the man she
doesn't love . . .

. . . Greer Garson and
Robert Young, the man
she does love



THE FORSYTHE SAGA

Starring: Errol Flynn, Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Robert Young, Janet Leigh. **Director:** Compton Bennett. **Producer:** Leon Gordon. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 113 minutes.

Critics are not born, they are educated by learning the hard lessons of being fair, just and objective in their criticisms. It would be easy to fall into a trap and become unfair, unjust and completely subjective about this film, for the simple reason that one's first reaction is to say . . . pretty good . . . lovely colouring and all that . . . splendid performance by Greer Garson . . . runs true to the book . . . but, so slow and dull.

However we must realise that the Forsythes were a dull lot who had an abundance of material things: property and furniture and servants and all the things one should have, my dear, and servants and the correct chairs and the right pictures, and wines and cigars and the choicest foods and the best of everything, yet nevertheless were poor in the things of spirit: love, joy, laughter, peace and spiritual riches. This picture portrays the Forsythes and their approach to life, admirably. Errol Flynn makes a good Soames, a man of property who possesses all things, yet possesses nothing. He owns his wife Irene (Greer Garson), but he does not possess her heart; he has money to burn but he cannot buy one drop of her love, whereas her affections go out to Bossiney, Robert Young, who hasn't a penny to bless himself with, but has charm, imagination and intelligence.

I recommend this film for its story value; for its fine portrayal of characters; and for its wholesome moral tone. I like the story because it is allied to life. Such people as the Forsythes have lived, do live and no doubt will continue to live; they will continue to prove also that worshippers of power and money

become dull and dreary and get no fun out of life. E.

MARTIN ROUMAGNAC

Starring: Marlene Dietrich and Jean Gabin. **Director:** Georges Lacombe. **Distributors:** Films de France. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 99 minutes.

Dietrich and Gabin are a team intended to rouse the passions of those who look to films for excitement rather than entertainment. An immoral intention, but it is not realised. I have rarely seen so dull a film. A small-time builder who is infatuated by a beautiful adventuress, eventually kills her, is acquitted and then allows himself to become a target for the gun of a jealous rival.

The acting is indifferent, the lighting, even in exteriors, more artificial than is customary in French cinema, the photography, last refuge of the charitable critic, mediocre.

V.

THE RECKLESS MOMENT

Starring: James Mason and Joan Bennett, with Geraldine Brooks and Henry O'Neill. A Columbia Picture. **Director:** Max Opuls. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 82 minutes.

Wondering what to say about this film, I feel I cannot improve on the phrase which heads the publicity blurb: "She kept a date with DANGER . . . he came, a MAN of DARKNESS . . . and closed in on her like the night"! Reading that, you know what you are in for. Perhaps it is a little misleading about a mother who only wanted to protect her daughter from an undesirable association, but finds herself involved with a dead man and two blackmailers! The peculiar ethics which govern screen crooks induce James Mason to agree to take only half the sum demanded; this because he likes Joan Bennett more than somewhat. To end the film he confesses to two murders and commits suicide. It should be added that Mr. Mason has not forgotten his Irish accent. It serves to remind us of *Odd Man Out*.

V.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

Starring: Eric Portman, Nadia Gray and Guy Rolfe with Edward Chapman, Maurice Denham, George Cole and John Carol. A Mayflower Production. **Director:** Robert Hamer. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 95 minutes.

The Police Chief and Gentleman Crook who mutually admire but fight each other are characters familiar to me from many a surreptitiously-read paperback novel in my youth. Even the dénouement, in which the crook and the cop crack a crib together for the honour of their country! Still, the Press synopsis assures us that the story is based on fact. Maybe. It is, nonetheless, unlikely, in spite of the excellent work of Eric Portman as the Police Chief and the particularly pleasing sets designed by Edward Carrick which evoke so beautifully the boulevard and riverside atmosphere of Paris. Also satisfying to an unusual degree is the photography of Geoffrey Unsworth. The firm hand of the director is likewise evident in many small touches in a film which, though it has its moments of tension and a surprise ending, seems hardly worth the attention of the maker of *It Always Rains on Sunday*.

Guy Rolfe is handsome as the Crook but little more. On the other hand, a number of small parts stand out for excellence: John Carol in a double rôle during one of which he admirably expresses terror while crossing a roof-high girder: George Cole as the Police Chief's stooge, rendered, for once, convincingly; Maurice Denham in one of his more developed characters as a pompous War Office Colonel: Edward Chapman in a lifelike make-up as Aristide Briand: James Hayter as a provincial Mayor.

Nadia Gray is a new face on our screen, a Roumanian actress about whom it is too early to say whether she acts or is naturally dumb.

An unusually likely ending demands that this film should be seen the right way round.

V.

THE GREAT SINNER

Starring: Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Melvyn Douglas, Walter Huston. **Director:** Robert Siodmak. **Producer:** Gottfried Reinhardt. Presented by M.-G.-M. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 109 minutes.

It would be difficult to say how many films have started in a poorly-furnished garret with the leading actor lying sick and neglected on his death bed. The next move is the flash-back, in order to explain how it all happened. This is a simple and effective way of doing the job, and the first few times it seems clever. But the time has come, one cannot but feel, for a new solution to this problem to be discovered.

With that reservation, it can be said without fear of contradiction that this is a very good film. Hollywood has managed to capture the atmosphere of Europe (the scene is set in Germany) which is no mean achievement. It is all thoroughly cis-Atlantic if one may coin a word. The period, 1860, seems genuine also; at least there are no obvious anachronisms. The acting is competent. Gregory Peck is as usual somewhat ponderous and Melvyn Douglas successfully portrays what is for him a rather unusual character—the manager of the Casino. Walter Huston and Ava Gardner are an excellent pair as father and daughter and they never let themselves forget the relationship. It is, moreover, a careful film in details, especially in a short sequence showing the end of a Requiem Mass. Short and unimportant, it nevertheless showed great care, even if it had to be called a memorial service for the benefit of the uninstructed.

The theme is gambling and the story tells of its evil effects and of its inability to give what the gambler seeks from it. We see Fedja, a young writer, drawn into the toils of the gambling tables by his desire to save Pauline and her father from the clutches of Armand de Glasse, the casino manager. Fedja wins a fortune and is in a position to redeem his friend's notes, but he has tasted success and cannot stop himself from risking his winnings. Thus he loses everything. He sinks to the depths of human

ignominy in satisfying his passion for gambling, and he even loses the rights over his whole future literary output. He finds his soul again in writing the story of his downfall and we end in the garret in which we began.

Much in the story is trite, but it is well told and at no point does it drag. Certainly a film worth a special visit to the cinema.

U.

THE ROMANTIC AGE

Starring: Mai Zetterling, Hugh Williams, Margot Grahame, Petula Clark, with Carol Marsh, Raymond Lovell and Paul Dupuis. A Pinnacle Production. **Director:** Edmond T. Greville. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

There is a law, I am told, which prohibits advertising matter which gives a false impression of what is to be seen on the screen inside the cinema. The hoardings which invite you to see *The Romantic Age* are certainly breaking this law with their implications of underclad schoolgirls in the presence of doting schoolmasters. The film is suitably dressed but has little else to justify a stupid story of a middle-aged master's infatuation for a sophisticated French minx impossibly played by Mai Zetterling. There is regrettable wastage of talent. Carol Marsh as a schoolgirl has little more to do than look wet at a swimming pool. Petula Clark, who has developed into a charming young lady, tries much too hard in a unconvincing rôle as a master's daughter. Paul Dupuis fails to look like a Chelsea play-boy. One of the films which make one think the anti-Ranks have something.

V.

INNOCENCE IS BLISS

Starring: Lucille Ball and William Holden. **Director:** Lloyd Bacon. **Producer:** S. Sylvan Simon. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

In this film Lucille Ball is the most incompetent of the stenog. school. She also has good looks. For these two

qualities she is chosen by William Holden, as Dick Richmond, to be the secretary of his bogus estate agency, which is only a cover for an illicit bookie's business. He regards her beauty and brainlessness as valuable assets and uses her charm to foist off the house seekers, while hoping she will not rumble the true nature of his business. In her innocence she commits the firm to a real property contract which gives great embarrassment to the firm and plenty of amusement to the audience.

A light comedy this, requiring only slight comment: it is a film you won't mind seeing at all.

G.

LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING

Starring: June Haver, Ray Bolger, Gordon McRae, Charlie Ruggles. **Director:** David Butler. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C.

The silver lining of song and dance (to my way of looking and listening, gay and genial) runs through this film. It is just right for this season of the year; it propounds no mighty problem; it is light and bright and relaxing and should be accepted as such, and even though it is a bit sentimental, why worry? A little sentiment, at the right time, keeps the heart hearty and the head healthy.

Through flash-backs we follow the career of Marilyn Miller (June Haver) who when a smiling young thing of twelve and still wearing pigtailed, danced her way into the show business and by force of talent and a sweet personality captured all hearts (and the heads of those box office snoopers who do not wrap up other people's talents in a napkin) June made the show business her career and died in harness.

I don't like her singing very much but the rhythm, the grace and the originality of her dances are delightful. She is ably aided by Ray Bolger who is a nice fellow to meet and who can dance and act. Marilyn's Paw and Maw and sisters and Gordon MacRae who sings, contribute to the film and S. Z. Sakall, the sentimental old fool whose face plops all over the place has one new joke, which is a lemon.

F.

A RUN FOR YOUR MONEY

Starring: Donald Houston, Moira Lister, Alec Guinness and Meredith Edwards. A Michael Balcon Production. **Director:** Charles Frend. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

Ealing Studios have done it again. After a series of comedies starting with *Hue and Cry* in London, a dash to *Another Shore* in Ireland, a trip to the Scottish Hebrides for *Whiskey Galore* and back again to London for a *Passport to Pimlico*, they have secured a number of Welshmen to give you *A Run for Your Money*, complete with Welsh harpers, singers, footballers, miners and preachers. The fact that these Cymric types spend most of their film time in London does not lessen the Ancient British character of the story. All the old jokes about the Jones' exile to England, the witcheries of London girls, the tongue-defying qualities of Welsh place names, and the rest of the repertoire, are brought in; but so deft is the handling of the script (Richard Hughes, Charles Frend, Leslie Norman) they all take on new life and produce true laughter. In spite of the acidulated references of one or two of the professionals to "clean British fun", I do not remember such honest and spontaneous laughter from critics for a very long time.

There is a clean, decent atmosphere about the Ealing products which

deserves to be more widely studied by those who claim to know what the public wants. Of Sir Michael Balcon, the producer of these films, it would be less than just to say that he has been lucky in his films for he is a man with a long experience of the cinema and has paid the public the compliment of studying their taste. His secret is to aim at first-class work in all departments: script, sets, direction, acting. The result is pure entertainment entirely lacking in those suggestive and tasteless allusions which seem to be inseparable from most of the screen offerings claiming the title of comedy.

Donald Houston and Meredith Edwards are two Welsh miners who win a trip to London and two hundred pounds between them. Moira Lister is a confidence girl who tries her hardest to separate the Jones and their money. Alec Guinness is a gardening correspondent who has been told to look after the two miners for the day ("How very much I prefer vegetables!"). If I say that Alec Guinness is excellent I do not wish to belittle the ingenuous portrayals of Houston or Meredith Edwards; it is only that they seemed to be just themselves while Guinness is building up a character. Moira Lister, too, plays charmingly and one almost fell for her line in sudden conversions. Hugh Griffith as a bucolic and bibbling harper is magnificent. Joyce Grenfell contributes a gem of characterisation as a West-End modiste.

This is a film to see: once, twice and again. V.



Two thumbs a lift . . .



Barney tries to . . .

Any Number Can Play

Starring: Clark Gable and Alexis Smith, with Wendell Corey, Audrey Totter, Frank Morgan, Mary Astor and Lewis Stone.

Producer: Arthur Freed. **Director:** Mervyn LeRoy.

Distributors: M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

Vice, Dice and Angina Pectoris. As Charley Enley Kyng, Clark Gable runs an honest gaming establishment. On the proceeds he keeps his wife (Alexis Smith), his adolescent son, his wife's sister and her worthless husband in comfortable circumstances. But Charley Kyng has Angina Pectoris and unless he retires, drink, smoke and tension will finish him off. Very well, he will go fishing with his wife and son. But the son, dogged in his college life by the social stigma of his father's despised profession, resents his father, and will not go fishing. And with their son in that defiant mood, his wife feels she cannot go fishing either. So Charley Enley Kyng, hurt, returns to his smoke and drink, and even toys with vice.

After a number of incidents which stress the rift between father and son, and the possibility of a rift between husband and wife, the latter learns of her husband's disease and determines to bring father and child together again before it is too late. To do this she brings the boy to the Casino where a game of crap is in progress (crap is an American game played with dice). A rich customer is having a run of most astonishing luck. As the game proceeds, ruin stares Charley in the face. He is advised to stop the game and cut his losses. But no; he puts his all upon a final throw—and wins.

Before he can put his winnings safely away, the whole party is held up by a pair of crooks. Now a gambler has no friends (Charley has said so himself) and Charley faces the crooks alone,

calling their bluff. But what is this? Charley is no longer alone: his son has left the group of cowering spectators and stands at his father's side. Heartened by this example, others follow and soon Charley is backed by a band of friendly customers, faithful employees and even by the loser of the game of crap. The crooks are easily overpowered and kicked out and the guests disperse.

Alone with his wife, his son and the faithful employees, Charley draws and pockets a card from a pack. He tells his men to draw for the Casino, against whatever they can raise. They draw a nine. A willing loser, Charley goes off happily with his wife and son. As they go, his wife takes a look at the card he has drawn. It was a knave!

So captivating is the charm of Clark Gable and so exciting are the last fifteen minutes of this film, that the adolescent heroics, the cheap sentiment and the confused thought of it are forgotten. All the more necessary then, to examine its moral implications.

Clark Gable as the hero must obviously have our sympathy. In order to get by the censorship he must therefore be a good man. But as the proprietor of a gambling hell he might (if he were not Clark Gable) quite well be a bad man. His goodness must therefore be established. This is done (a) by his charm; (b) by his honesty; the worthless brother-in-law, employed in the Casino, is blackmailed by the crooks into using loaded dice on their behalf, though he knows well enough that discovery would mean his instant dismissal; (c) by his kindness; Charley finds a woman in despair at having lost her all on a horse (the establishment includes a Turf Commission Agency), pretends that a mistake has been made about the winner and so refunds her the money; an elderly and ruined client feels that his luck is in once more, so Charley gives him a stake to try again. When the old gentleman loses and tries to commit suicide, Charley prevents him and sends him home in a cab; (d) by his generosity; he gives the Casino to his faithful employees.

The profession of the hero and the subject of the film is one of which many filmgoers disapprove. Gambling must therefore be shown in an unfavourable light. This is attempted (a) by the woman and her horse and the ruined old man (as above); (b) by the distress of the neglected wife who, for comfort in her loneliness, has to resort to a *memory room* in the basement of their private residence; (c) by the attitude of the son. He has a grudge against his father. True, he declares he doesn't believe in gambling. But the main cause of his resentment, as he explains at great length to a girl friend, is his father's ability to do everything better than he can.

Furthermore, since gambling is not generally accepted as "a good thing", it would be more seemly if the hero gave it up. Most conveniently that problem is settled by the Angina Pectoris. This is made clear (a) by a medical consultation; (b) by an attack which comes in the nick of time to prevent Charley from going fishing with Mary Astor, in consolation for the disappointment due to the refusal of his wife and son; (c) by a second attack which comes on as Charley stakes his all in the spectacular game of crap (fortunately a tablet placed under the tongue provides speedy relief).

So with the hero on the side of the angels, with gambling condemned and, in the end, triumphantly given up, we can get by the censorship and the public can enjoy the climax of a wildly exciting game of crap with a good conscience.

Or can it? It is the teaching of the Church that gambling is not in itself sinful. In fact gambling is a luxury, and a luxury is not necessarily a sin. Those who totally disapprove of gambling have usually suffered in some way from its abuse. Paul, the son of the hero in this film "does not believe in gambling". Had he been able to analyse what he meant by that, it would probably boil down to an objection to being exposed to the ever-present risk of becoming the son of a ruined man. A perfectly valid objection, too.

It is, of course, the abuse of gambling which is sinful. To risk money that is due for the maintenance of the family is a sin. To allow gambling to become a passion is a sin. It prevents one

paying due attention to one's duties and plays fast and loose with personality. It can become an idolatry, as sport can become an idolatry. And the trouble with gambling is that it can so easily be abused, as there can be few delusions so attractive as the hope of getting something for nothing.

During the course of this film there is nothing to indicate even an implicit approval of sinful gambling. That Kyng runs a place that is open to abuse is neither here nor there. It is not sinful to run a decent public house; it is no more sinful to run a decent Casino. And in any case, neither Kyng's wife nor his son really want him to run the place and I am sure we are all very glad that Clark Gable is able to give it up without loss of face.

But what of the way Kyng gets away with other people's money: is not that sinful? That question is dealt with in a scene where a couple who have lost money come and complain to Charley and his wife that he has robbed them of their all. Charley replies with some justice that if they had been the winners they would not have given him much sympathy if he had come complaining to them.

So far so good. It is not until the end of the film that art falls foul of ethics. And how foul! For the end is happy. That is to say, the good man is united to his wife and child, the fortune has been saved, the good employees are generously rewarded, the crooks have been put to flight and the man who staked heavily and lost was so rich that it really did not matter. It is an end of which the audience will no doubt approve. But how has it been achieved? By Kyng staking everything he has upon the throw of the dice—and winning. Suppose he had lost?

Had Kyng lost, his wife and child would have suffered from his grave sin of injustice. But his grave sin of injustice (and please Mr. Film-maker get this clear) would not lie in his losing, but in his taking the risk at all.

Kyng should never have gambled to that extent. When things were getting out of hand he should have cut his losses and closed the game. But that would have spoiled the film. Instead, we go away approving the happy end. And that will spoil our morals—but who cares!

W.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Films For Humanity

Readers will notice in this issue a reference to the newly formed Film Council, *Films for Humanity*. The training scheme mentioned recently will operate under these auspices. It is to be understood that while our object is to formulate groups technically trained to professional standards of efficiency, we do not envisage the training of apprentices for the commercial film market. Many missionary priests are equipping themselves as technicians in commercial studios, but their object is not to enter into competition with laymen who get their living from film making, but to make and use films in accordance with the directions of "Vigilanti Cura" which insists on professional standards when Catholics make films.

This does not mean professional standards in *film costing*. We claim the right, and we hope to have the ability, to use film for religious purposes without submitting to the fantastic financial limitations proper to the commercial entertainment product.

Science and Religion

Many readers ask us about the Faith and Fact Films, *God of the Atom* and *God of Creation*. These excellent pictures made by the Moody Bible Institute of Science, Los Angeles, were reviewed by "Q." in the May 1948 issue of *Focus*, page 116. Copies of this issue are available, price 7d., post free.

Welcome Reading

The letter in the last issue of *Focus* from Edward J. Higgins was welcome reading. It is perhaps not understood that the kind of regional groups we have in mind need not consist of large numbers of enthusiasts. This kind of apostolate always begins with the few, like Christianity itself. Where are the twelve Catholic film apostles?

Study Week-ends

Study week-ends and Conferences are already envisaged for Dundee, in March and at the Scottish Passionist

Retreat House later on. One day conferences on various film subjects are to take place at Oxford, in January. Perhaps persons who are interested in the regional idea could get in touch with us. We shall be glad to co-operate.

Film Competition

One primary object in inviting entries from cinematographers was to give us a basis for estimating the standard of efficiency already available among our Catholic enthusiasts so that we might judge how near we are to having a source of supply for our scheme of vocational film makers. If you have a film which you have made, do not hesitate to send it along.

Interest Grows

Very Rev. Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., revealed the fact that interest in the Fatima film has extended to several countries. He also revealed that the Foreign Office has bought ten copies of *Crucifers to Walsingham*. About the contemplated "Thomas More" film, he said that it would be a gigantic undertaking and would need careful planning.

Monk Makes Film in Tibet

The Catholic Church produces some very Catholic types. One of the most unusual must be the Abbé Detry. Professional boxer, sailor and explorer, he turned his mind to the priesthood, becoming a monk of St. Bernard.

Fr. Detry has now returned from a tour in Tibet on the borders of which a branch of the St. Bernard Monastery has been founded. In the course of his travels he managed to make a 16mm. film, in spite of the well-known dislike of the Tibetans of photography of any kind.

The Catholic Film Institute, in conjunction with the Challenor Club, is arranging for Fr. Detry to give a lecture in the course of which he will show his film. This will take place in mid-January, probably at Westminster Cathedral Hall. Please look out for details in the Catholic Press.

NEW DOCUMENTARIES

By J. A. V. B.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

The Medical Missionaries of Mary were pioneers among religious congregations in using film professionally to tell the story of their foundation and work. Now another group of Irish Sisters follows their example with a film which bids fair to emulate the success of *Visitation*. This time it is the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, of Killeshandra, Co. Cavan, and they have called their film *Out of the Darkness*, an apt title, for their work is to bring the light of Christianity as

full-length film, will certainly establish his reputation as a significant figure in the field of Irish cinema.

The Catholic Film Institute has been asked to arrange a London Première for *Out of the Darkness* and it is hoped that it may have its first public showing sometime during the latter half of January. It is a feature documentary and covers much ground in its twelve reels, from the foundation of the Congregation in Cavan in 1924, to the profession of some native Sisters in Nigeria in 1949.



The Chief's son is seriously ill

well as the benefits of medicine and education to the dark places and peoples of Africa.

It is enough now to say that it is a beautiful piece of work, photographed by Pat Butler and directed by Desmond Toomey, two young Irishmen who have a flair for film making and from whom we shall expect to hear much more later on. Mr. Toomey has ideas about the future of film in Ireland: we hope that he will go far on the way to realising them. They are in accord with our own and *Out of the Darkness*, his first

We hope to have the privilege of the distribution of 16mm. copies of the film. Please look out for further details in the Catholic Press.

AT THE SIGN OF THE FLYING ANGEL

Producers: Selwyn Films Ltd.

Sponsors: Missions to Seamen.

Running time: 20 minutes.

This film, made by Christopher Radley for the Church of England Missions to Seamen, is a simply-told

and beautifully photographed documentary account of what that organisation does for seamen of all denominations, and might well serve as an inspiration to our Apostleship of the Sea to let its own very considerable and rather wider work be made known to the vast audiences reached by the cinema. Should it ever embark on such a film it is to be hoped that it will pay more attention to the commentary than was done in the present film. There are obvious and unnecessary clichés instead of the film speaking for itself as it could so often do. A commentary in such a case needs to enhance the visuals not underline them. As a result the beautiful voice of Anthony Kimmins is largely wasted.

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE, 1948

Produced and Photographed by the Rev. F. E. Young. 2 reels, Kodachrome. Silent. Owners Scottish Catholic Truth Society, Edinburgh.

Father Young is one of the pioneers of the Catholic Film Movement in England. Last year he was invited by the Scottish Catholic Truth Society to provide a record of their pilgrimage to Lourdes under the leadership of Archbishop McDonald. The result is a beautiful piece of colour photography which will arouse nostalgic memories in the minds of the lovers of Lourdes.

The film records the traditional exercises of piety, the Bathing of the Sick, the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament as well as the Torchlight Procession and some pilgrims in their more leisure moments.

If one must find a fault with the film, it is that it does not live up to the promise of careful scripting noticeable in the early scenes. Since it was inevitably a piece of reporting, perhaps this is not to be wondered at.

Though not for distribution in the ordinary way, those interested in this useful film might do well to ask the owners for permission to show it outside the limits of the city for which it was made.

PEACE WORK

Produced, Photographed and Commentary written and spoken by Alan Turner. 2 reels, Kodachrome. Obtainable: Spa Lane Mills, Derby.

Mr. Alan Turner's new film is perhaps the best possible illustration of the warning given in "Vigilanti Cura" that Catholics should employ professional film makers to make Catholic films if those films are to succeed.

The most serious criticism must be of the long captions, taken from the sayings and writings of Harmel, which appear from time to time. They are important to the theme, but their presentation in tall block letters running right to both edges of the screen made them trying to read and so one tended to disregard them and their import was lost.

Mr. Turner, speaking at the première of the film, said that one had to visit Val-des-Bois in order to appreciate its atmosphere; but it is the task of the film maker to convey his own experience to those, less fortunate than he, whose only means of participation in the scenes which have inspired him is through the cinema, and this task Mr. Turner has not performed.

It is interesting to compare *Peace Work* with his earlier film *The Sacrifice We Offer*. In the latter he undertook to heighten the spectator's appreciation of something familiar and he succeeded because there was no barrier of an unshared experience between him and his audience. In his present film his audience is presented with too great a task of imagination whether it devotes most of its attention to the pictures or to the commentary.

Perhaps it is because Mr. Turner, whose zeal for the film apostolate is so apparent, so isolates himself in the making of his films. Collaboration, dangerous in literature and the drama, almost impossible in music, and unthinkable in printing and sculpture, is an essential of the cinema.

MICHAEL LEYLAND.

Some Films and Strips of Educational and General Interest

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

Gateway Film Library, 9 Edward Close,
St. Albans, Herts.

Dawn Trust, Aylesbury, Bucks.

G.B.I. Film Library, Aintree Road,
Perivale, Middx.

Common Ground Ltd., Sydney Place,
London, S.W.7.

Wallace Heaton Ltd., 127 New Bond
Street, London, W.1.

British Gas Council, 1 Grosvenor Place,
London, S.W.1.

Petroleum Information Bureau, 46 St.
James Place, London, S.W.1.

FILMS

A ROMAN EPISODE

Gateway, 1 reel, 10 minutes, coloured.
Hire : Silent, 10/-; Sound, 12/6.

An informative film based on excavations at St. Albans and covering many aspects of social life—the theatre, costume, religion, etc. The position of St. Albans in relation to other Roman towns and roads is shown and much useful information is provided by the comparison of actual remains of the walls, foundations of buildings, the theatre, with models of the buildings as they would appear reconstructed. Close-ups of the remains of the wall with “lacing” courses of flat, red tiles in the main fabric of flint show clearly the materials used and methods of building and numerous objects of daily use, such as pottery, ornaments and bronze objects are provided by the Verulamina Museum. The dress of all classes is shown in the concluding scenes of daily life and appears to special advantage in the attractive colours of the film. This is an interesting production containing useful and well-arranged material and would be suitable either as an introduction to or revision of life in Roman Britain.

Suitability : 13 plus.

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Gateway, 1 reel, 10 minutes, coloured.
Hire : as above.

This background film of medieval life, shows the work, recreations, dress and buildings of the period, the sound version, in addition, providing medieval music played on the pipe and tabor. Beginning with life on the manor, an animated plan shows the working of the three-field system and leads on to scenes from the villein's life—cultivating his strip, gathering fuel and joining the other village folk in the dancing and festivities of a Holy Day. Other centres of medieval life, the castle and monastery, are also shown, but more briefly and models are used to show principles of construction.

This film, like the others, consists mainly of scenes from a pageant and gains and loses on this account. While the setting is beautiful and the cast large, the choice of incident seems sometimes determined by what was available, rather than by what the subject of the film requires. Something might have been included of life in the manorial hall or the holding of the manor court and more emphasis laid on the importance of the Church to the medieval community. As a brief summary of a number of activities, the film is useful and conveys a good impression of the colour and life of Merrie England.

Suitability : 12 plus.

VICTORIAN HOLIDAY

Gateway, 1 reel, 5 minutes, coloured,
silent. Hire : 5/6.

As a short film, this is more successful than the last since the aim is to create an atmosphere and a single impression rather than portray a series of connected events. This is extremely useful for amusements and costume, some of which will be familiar from the first pages of the family album. Here is the penny-farthing and cricket on the village green, dated with its underarm

bowling, and all that is most characteristic of Victorian dress, little boys in sailor suits or short jackets with wide breeches fastened below the knee with the girls in their straw hats and wide sashes, the men distinguished by their top hats and narrow trousers and the women by a colourful assortment of feathers, ribbons and posies.

Suitability : 13 plus.

18th CENTURY ELECTION

Gateway, 1 reel, 5 minutes, coloured.
Hire : sound 7/6; silent 5/6.

A brief presentation of all the activities incidental to an eighteenth century election—the electioneering speeches, bribery of voters with money and free beer, the actual voting procedure and fights following the announcement of the result. The film as a whole is disappointing, chiefly because it tries to convey too much in too short a time. The episodes have to be presented summarily and the result is confusing and fails to carry conviction.

Suitability : 13 plus.

The "SYMPHONIES IN STONE" series are the kind of film of which one does not grow tired. Schools or clubs which aim at forming a film library of their own might do well to include some of these among their early acquisitions.

Dawn Trust, R.F.325, 1 reel each, sound.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

is truly an "Inspiration Film". Against a background of beautiful music, the architectural and historical glories of England's old Abbey are viewed. The altars, the tombs, the statuary, the exquisite fan-vaulting are seen, each in its own setting, and the commentary if a little rapid, is nevertheless clear, simple and dignified.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

is a worthy companion film to the above. With the same musical setting and an equally excellent commentary, one of the architectural triumphs of East Anglia is shown to us. It is true that this film has not the same universal appeal as *Westminster Abbey* for the subject is not so intimately entwined with English History but it has its own

special value as giving a fine portrayal of a great Gothic cathedral.

"They dreamt not of a perishable home

Who thus could build . . ."

So quotes the commentator and truly this film brings home to us the genius and amazing skill and industry with which our forefathers built. The magnificent proportions, the beauty of sculpture the delicate tracery of the two rose windows, the Dean's Eye and the Bishop's Eye appear to advantage and particularly successful are the effects of light and shade.

Suitability : 14 plus, or adult audience. General interest.

THE NATION'S WEALTH

British Gas Council, sound. Free loan.

This is an enlightening film, in colour, with a commentary by Freddie Grisewood, showing how coke and gas are produced from coal and how in the purifying process the raw materials for a great variety of everyday articles are obtained—nylons, plastics, dyes, scents, drugs, D.D.T., fertilisers, etc. A film of general interest.

FRENCH "U" and LA GARE

Two films for the teaching of French.

G.B.I. Language and Literature Films. F.513, F.512, sound.

The name of M. Stephan demonstrating these films is sufficient to indicate their value.

French "U". This film demonstrates a method of teaching this difficult sound. We see the master in front of his class. He explains to his pupils exactly how to make the sound. Then the boys make it. The failure of one of them to produce it leads to a further explanation.

The film is quite useful and could be profitably used with a first year French class as a revision of this sound.

La Gare. This second film of the series is more advanced. Most people love a station and with two main speaking characters, a departure scene at a railway station is portrayed with a background of all the life and bustle and interest of a French railway station.

Classes may find it difficult to understand the first time unless they are carefully prepared and their ears are

well trained for French sounds. The film, however, should be very useful and could be used at the end of the first year with a good class, or in second year. It might also be used for revision with a fourth year class.

FILM STRIPS

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD—DENMARK

N. V. Scarfe. G.G.B. 206. Obtainable from library of Wallace Heaton.

This film strip is one of the Regional Geography Series, and is divided into four sections dealing with the land and the animals, the farm, towns and industries of Denmark. The first two parts are excellent, giving typical pictures of the countryside, fertile and infertile, and emphasising all the main features of Danish dairy-farming.

The towns' section has less opportunity, the best picture being one of the centre of Copenhagen, and the only industries shown are the making of Copenhagen china and shipbuilding, the latter in rather poor pictures, by aerial views of the docks.

The strip concludes with two very good diagrammatic comparisons of land utilisation and occupations of the population in Scandinavia, the Low Countries and the United Kingdom. The whole strip is well constructed and accompanied by full teaching notes.

THE STORY OF OIL

Petroleum Information Bureau, Free loan.

This is a strip of 54 frames showing by picture and diagram the What? Where? How? Why? of petroleum, its origin, prospecting, mining, refining and products. It can be supplemented by samples and mounted photographs (also free loan), and by wall-charts (4/6 set of 3). Together, these give a working knowledge of an important subject.

Suitability: 16 plus.

NOTE. The reviewers apologise to G.B.E. Library for the mistake made on page 323 of November issue. The present address is: G.B.E. Ltd., Aintree Road, Perivale, Greenford, Middx.

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IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

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COVER PERSONALITY

EILEEN HERLIE

Perhaps no more dynamic young actress has crossed the London theatre scene in recent years than Eileen Herlie, that smouldering aloof dark-head, who lives quietly in South Kensington, and is conspicuous by her absence at film star parades and elaborate publicity gatherings.

Born in Glasgow, where she loathed her safe family job as a stockbroker's clerk, and nursed a turbulent dramatic *daemon* under her prim office sweater, she has inherited her Scottish mother's striking beauty on the one hand, and on the other her Irish father's forceful personality and indomitable willpower. But her voice is her own—a magnificent, full-throated possession that ranges from Sarah Bernhardt's "plastered whispers" to the powerful crescendoes of a well-remembered lady called Mrs. Siddons. Were Rachel and the Duse to return to earth, they would both honour her with their jealousy. Her large, dark, Irish eyes are compelling and magnetic when she is acting; her forceful personality on the stage dominates her audience; her emotions, always under perfect control, give one the impression of great forces held firmly in leash by inspired intelligence. Yet, when making tea—she always boils it!—she is a strange, warm, unsophisticated girl who wistfully loves the earth—earthly things and the colourful people who struggle and suffer. Her life and character have made her an implacable enemy of insincerity, theatrical vanity and the highfalutin'.

During the darkest days of the war, she decided to leave Glasgow and come to London. Glasgow was her birthplace, but it was not a theatre city and could give her no experience other than that learned painfully on the amateur stage. Of this, she had had her fill. Her parents stood aghast. But she silenced them with one terrific speech worthy of any Counsel for the Defence! She counted her cash—thirty pounds, and boarded the Royal Scot for weal or woe. Thirty pounds was a meagre sum for such an adventure, but she had faith—the sort that moves mountains.

Like all true artists struggling without help towards their rightful place, she encountered pain, hunger

and disillusionment, but never despair or bitterness. I once found her arguing with an apple-woman at a barrow in Camden Town. Eileen won—even if the apple-woman was Irish and knew Shakespearean invective! When I remonstrated with her, she said she was rightly deepening her experience of life. I guessed what she meant later when I saw her playing "Peg o' my Heart" at the Scala Theatre. She was so charming that she hurt. The critics grunted appreciably; they thawed even more before her later rôles at the same theatre; but they remained grudging to the pestiferous newcomer. Who was she, anyway?

Then Tyrone Guthrie saw her, and had the good sense to pack her peremptorily out of London to the Liverpool Repertory Theatre to be leading lady in the Old Vic Company there. He foresaw in her a star of the first magnitude. He wanted her to develop outside and come back.

A year later, she joined the Company of Four at the Lyric, Hammersmith, where her acting powers under Murray MacDonald's direction, began to flower in all their rich and profuse promise. I remember being delighted with the subtlety of her playing in the "Thracian Horses".

Then one night the whole coterie of critics suddenly and amazingly lifted their heads from under their arms, or wherever they keep them, and "discovered" her, as the tragic queen in "The Eagle has two Heads". A terrific hullabulla followed. They blew their trumpets, clashed their cymbals, mounted their rostrums, clinked their glasses and emptied their champagne glasses and their fountain pens. They would even have strummed their zithers, had they known at the time that such an instrument existed! One of them even reprimanded me for taking the Herlie "discovery" so nonchalantly! I laughed heartily, and only the mischievous Eileen saw the joke!

But her performance in "The Eagle" was an artistic tour de force. In her playing, a very tangible part of the theatre's former glory took heart again and flowered. She demanded her place in the front rank of dramatic actresses and received it. By her side at the top,

she found only a very few, and none so young as she who is still on the bright side of 30.

Her classic performance in "The Medea" followed. This terrifying test was presented to her, and she received it without a tremor. Many actresses had become "great" the safe way—no names, no packdrill—but that way was not the Herlie choice. Again, even though gravely hampered by a most imperfect American adaptation of the Euripidean masterpiece, she projected his tragic queen into our very beings and touched us mercilessly with the classic import of her acting. We left the theatre limply, conscious of a new priestess of the dramatic arts.

Sir Alexander Korda's generous film contract followed and since then, millions in Britain and America have seen Eileen Herlie's distinguished portrayal of the Queen in *Hamlet*.

Her new film, *The Angel with the Trumpet*, under Karl Hartle's direction, in which she depicts a character maturing from girlhood into old age, will win her fresh laurels according to the wiseheads, when it is released in the spring.

But a brilliant future for her is assured. She has in her reserved, mysterious make-up all of the major things that matter, including that most rare of all accomplishments—intelligent emotionalism. I have heard great people in the theatre and films speak of her with high admiration; I have heard very little people who are dwarfed by her personality on the stage tear her to pieces. With neither is she much concerned—she has a mission, and she must be about her business.

PAUL V. CARROLL.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. II,
Nos. 10, 11 and 12)

<i>Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer</i>	(B) (346)
<i>Au Grand Balcon</i>	(B) (315)
<i>Barkleys of Broadway</i>	(B) (304)
<i>Big Steal, The</i>	(B) (339)
<i>Chiltern Hundreds, The</i>	(C) (307)
<i>Crooked Way, The</i>	(F) (346)
<i>East of Java</i>	(A) (350)
<i>Escape Me Never</i>	(A) (310)
<i>Everybody Does It</i>	(B) (338)
<i>File on Thelma Jordan, The</i>	(A) (339)
<i>Give Us This Day</i>	(A) (336)
<i>Hasty Heart, The</i>	(B) (308)
<i>Home of the Brave</i>	(B) (339)
<i>In The Good Old Summertime</i>	(C) (336)
<i>Interrupted Journey, The</i>	(B) (341)
<i>L'Aigle à Deux Têtes</i>	(A) (348)
<i>Landfall</i>	(B) (347)
<i>Little Women</i>	(C) (338)
<i>Marius</i>	(A) (315)

<i>Mighty Joe Young</i>	(B) (341)
<i>Mother Knows Best</i>	(B) (314)
<i>Prince of Foxes</i>	(A) (337)
<i>Pursuit</i>	(A) (340)
<i>Red, Hot and Blue</i>	(B) (350)
<i>Search, The</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Secret Garden, The</i>	(C) (316)
<i>Secret of Mayerling</i>	(A) (313)
<i>So Dear to my Heart</i>	(D) (312)
<i>Streets of Laredo</i>	(C) (350)
<i>There was a Land</i>	(C) (306)
<i>Tokyo Joe</i>	(B) (340)
<i>Under Capricorn</i>	(A) (310)
<i>Une Si Jolie Petite Plage</i>	(A) (348)
<i>Walking Hills, The</i>	(C) (313)
<i>When My Baby Smiles at Me</i>	(D) (314)
<i>Velvet Touch, The</i>	(B) (347)
<i>You can't Sleep Here</i>	(A) (316)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Christopher Columbus</i>	(B) (183)
<i>Hamlet</i>	(B) (130)
<i>Joan of Arc</i>	(B) (126)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Maytime in Mayfair</i>	(B) (172)
<i>Monsieur Vincent</i>	(B) (230)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B) (70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A) (159)
<i>Visitation</i>	(B) (134)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

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A FILM REVIEW



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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

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No. 2

The Sauce of Criticism

In the last issue, one of our reviewers said that critics are not born but educated in a school where they must learn the hard lessons of being fair, just and objective in their criticisms. Now, what is sauce for the critic is sauce for the Editor. Editors, like critics, are not born, they are fashioned — and prevented from becoming old-fashioned — by the constructive criticism of people who are good enough to support the press. Most Editors dearly love constructive critics, for it is the sauce of their criticisms which gives just that bit of edge and bite to a magazine, and keeps it interesting.

We are not inviting saucy letters, but we do ask for the sauce of constructive criticism. We ask you to lend us your brains. But

please do not expect us to avail ourselves of all ideas sent along. As far as possible, and as far as they are in keeping with the policy of Focus, we shall use your ideas; however, you must always remember that our pages and our purses are limited.

A wit once said that all Editors are either copy-cuts or copy-cats. This Editor tries to avoid being a copy-cat, but he confesses to being rather savage with his copy-cuts. No harm is meant. It is a question of cutting one's copy according to the number of pages that go between one's cover. If be-times you find that your copy has been cut, keep calm and count ten before you decide to cut the Editor's throat.

EDITOR.

Vocation in the Films

By H. A. C. CONNELL

To one who has specialised in the subject of religion in the films, vocation seems to be a notable topic in the cinema of 1949.

I missed Margaret Lockwood as a novice in *Madness of the Heart*, but I gather that I did not miss much. But there is this to be thankful for that after consultation with the Catholic Film Institute, some lines misconceiving vocation were slightly altered.

The agreeable *Come to the Stable* was not calculated to throw much light on the religious life beyond giving the correct impression that it is one of sanctified ordinariness. And taste in music seems to have become more liturgical in cinema convents. But the chief grace of vocation again appears to be the gift of extracting large sums of money for humanitarian purposes from those well endowed with it, of whatever creed, class or degree of disreputability. This film trod, a trifle more securely, the well worn paths of *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*.

Winter Meeting broke fresh ground. An ordinary love interest was suddenly complicated by the man announcing that he had always wanted to be a priest. "A priest!" gasps Bette Davis and the music swells up into a melodramatic climax. But once that concession to conventional values, regrettable but momentary, has been made, the matter is handled extraordinarily well. The girl, daughter of a Unitarian minister, makes no suggestion of the popular idea of "wastage" in a dedicated celibate life. In fact it is she who, after considerable and sensible discussion, tells the man that if he evades his vocation for the sake of marrying her, his character will "rot by degrees". As she was the principal sufferer and he was rather inconsiderate and boorish I thought this distinctly handsome of her. It might be urged that the level is not

very deep. But that is correct realistically. Complete comprehension of the nature of the priesthood is not to be expected in a non-Catholic girl. It is also correct artistically, filmically or whatever is the correct adverb. An ordinary film is not the place for the exposition of the profounder elements of theology. But I consider that the introduction into a popular film with a well known star of this conflict between a pre-existing vocation and a supervening human love, solved in favour of the priesthood, marks an advance in the presentation of religion in the films and that its broad educational and propaganda value far outweighs any minor blemishes.

To forestall criticism I must explain that I am well aware that the term vocation cannot be properly applied to the Protestant ministry. I know the difference between a priest and a parson. But there are sufficient resemblances to induce me to refer, in a sort of appendix, to *Marry Me*. We are accustomed to clergymen in the films either as animated local colour, comic relief or convenient objects for the expression of an outlook opposed to organised religion. Martin (I can't remember his surname) in *Marry Me* is one of the principal characters. And he is neither fool nor knave, neither mountebank, "hearty", killjoy nor hypocrite. I feel that considerable care must have been taken with this sympathetic portrayal of the contemporary clergyman who, as in real life, wears sometimes a Roman collar and sometimes a tie. The girl whom he eventually marries is somewhat flabbergasted when the removal of a scarf first reveals his occupation. "We're no worse than other people," he says. There was surely meant to be irony in the remark. But the audience (I was present at an ordinary showing) gave never a laugh. Indeed I pictured many of them going home with a quite new idea for serious

consideration; perhaps parsons aren't so bad after all. The idea that marriage to a virtuous night club hostess could bring into his life something more valuable than anything before may provoke embarrassment or derision among some Anglicans. But

clergymen are frequently regarded by their parishioners—and sometimes by themselves—more as welfare workers than either priests or preachers. And those of us who do not regard Martin as an official in Christ's Church may well find him rather a nice young man.

The Use of Films for Catholic Publicity

By Christopher Radley

"It's only propaganda" is commonly said of much of the work of specialised film producers like myself, with the obvious suggestion that there is something discreditable about our calling.

Unhappily the word "propaganda" has acquired such odium since the Communists, Nazis and others of their kind perverted truth to their own ends in Press and Film publicity, that the term has becoming synonymous with the spreading of lies and half-truths.

It is, therefore, necessary to rehabilitate the word by emphasising that it is the wrong use of persuasion which is alone blameworthy.

The propagation of truth is and always has been one of the marks of the Church and indeed, as everyone knows, one of the oldest Congregations of the Curia is called "Propaganda Fidei".

Everyone who wishes to express ideas by word or in writing, and this includes film sponsors, producers and script-writers, must propagate some views, and the important thing is solely whether they be true or false.

So in dealing with the right use of films in publicity, we are considering honest and truthful propaganda, whether it be in publicising goods or the Gospel. As the editor of this magazine has frequently stated, echoing the words of the Holy Father, the film is today the greatest instrument for

influencing people, and must be used for Christian ends. It has greater power than the radio because ideas and facts are more easily apprehended through the eye than the ear, though, as in films, sound added to sight has the greatest effect of all.

Therefore the fostering of the production of films which will express Christian values is the duty of all. Since it is the function of the Catholic Film Institute to do this very thing, as a first step every adult Catholic should become a member of the Institute and read its organ.

If 50,000 read about the good and worthwhile films reviewed in *Focus* and made a point of seeing only the best, this alone would encourage producers to face the risks of making "feature" films having Christian values.

WITNESSES OF THE FAITH

But to produce films of more direct propaganda value, such as those concerned with the biographies of Saints, much more direct support would be needed since their potential audiences would be smaller. Some day, when the receipts of the Penny-a-Day-Fund exceed £100 a day, it will be possible to film the stories of St. Thomas More or Edmund Campion, just as funds to make the epic film *Monsieur Vincent* were raised by M. de la Graudière in France.

Such films would be propaganda of the most effective kind, by bearing witness to the stand which the finest spirits of every age have made in defence of the Church and her teaching.

Apart from these expensive vehicles of ideas, can more modest and inexpensive films be effective in presenting specifically Catholic ideas and views to the people, and if so, can they be made with present resources? Most emphatically they can.

The answer lies in the production of documentary or factual films. That such films are a valuable means of information and publicity is shown by their use on a large scale by industry and by the State. To a limited extent, this type of film has been used for religious information by various Christian bodies, as, for example, the film *God and the Atom* in the U.S.A., *Your Inheritance* and *Visitation* in this country. If made with the same professional precision and quality as is the case with "feature" or the best documentary films, and if handled in such a way that the emotions of the audience are stirred sufficiently to apprehend the facts presented, these films are a powerful means of enlisting the sympathy of great numbers of people, who would never take the trouble to read the same material presented in print.

Such a film as that dealing with the Pilgrimage to Fatima, now in production, will undoubtedly stir the interest of many non-Catholics to a new understanding of the veneration given by Catholics to Our Lady.

A MOST PRESSING NEED

But what is also needed is a number of films which will instruct both Catholics and non-Catholics in the Church's teaching on the great moral and social questions of the day, such questions as the duties of employers and employees towards each other, and above all the meaning of Education.

Such films should be acceptable by ordinary cinema exhibitors, and be in the nature of points of view. The most pressing need today is to explain the Catholic position regard-

ing religious education, and for this purpose the film is the ideal means of presenting the Catholic case. The film technique should be similar to that employed in the *March of Time* or *This Modern Age* series, namely that of stating the problem and then putting forward the points of view of both the secularists and Christians. I say "Christians" with intention, since the support of Anglicans and others of our separated brethren should be sought, for the problem concerns them as well as ourselves.

In fact, the Schools problem is the great problem of today, and one that is world wide. Somehow all who value freedom must be enlisted in our support, so that freedom of conscience in education ceases to be solely an apparently "Roman Catholic" problem, but one that concerns all men of goodwill.

Needless to say, the making of a film should be only part of the general publicity campaign in which the Catholic Truth Society, the Catholic Press, and indeed the National Press, will be used to present the case. Apart from seeking distribution in the ordinary cinemas, the film could be shown at mass demonstrations and in all parish halls, so that at least every Catholic could know the facts of the situation.

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN NEEDED

Though the cost of making such a film is small compared with that required for the cheapest "feature" film, nevertheless its production involves costs similar to other forms of Press and Radio publicity. The great religious congregations and the leading laymen's organisations could play a great part in raising the necessary funds. Each Order or Society could be urged to contribute a specific sum towards the target figure needed to make the film and the general publicity campaign associated with its distribution. Passing the plate again at this juncture may seem a heavy new burden, but incomparably less than the burden of annually finding vast sums of money towards the cost of building new schools.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. I—PURPOSE

Focus readers now know of the Catholic Film Institute's admirable intention of encouraging the formation of Film Study Groups wherever possible with the dual purpose of increasing understanding of the potentialities of film, and seeking to discover people of vision and talent wishing to become efficient film craftsmen in the making of films of religious value.

Such meetings, if well organised, can plant the seeds from which may grow the Group or Groups dedicated to developing film for religious purposes, unrelated to professional production. However, it is essential that every Study Group should work to a plan based on a syllabus designed to provide progressive tuition, otherwise meetings may easily resolve themselves into shapeless arguments on the merits or demerits of current films. It is the intention, therefore, of this series of articles, to outline a suggested approach which, it is hoped, will help Group organisers, even though they need not strictly adhere to the proposed lessons in the Course.

By way of introduction, I should like to stress the need to begin at the beginning, which does *not* mean learning to criticise films at the local cinema. The film on the screen is the *end* of the story, and the reviews by the Panel of Priests in Focus provide all the constructive comment necessary on current productions.

The task of the student is to look behind and beyond such information, and learn, first, of the size and ramifications of the industry in various parts of the world, and how it is divided into production, distribution and exhibition.

Unless and until Study Groups become fully informed on *all* aspects of the medium, and possess a thorough knowledge of the inner working of the industry, they cannot hope to help in the essential task of laying the foundations for a religious film group, capable and expert enough to make valuable contributions to the Church and avoid

the mistakes of its professional counterpart. Neither the developing of one's critical faculty, nor the amassing of technical knowledge is enough unless backed by complete understanding of the industry as a whole.

That is why the proposed Study Groups are going to break new ground, for they are approaching the subject fundamentally and systematically. An organiser needs to devise a blueprint of the industry which explains the interrelation of its several branches. Production needs to be divided into features and short films, the latter being subdivided into theatrical and non-theatrical channels. The purpose and application of the Quota Act needs to be understood and the conditions it imposes on distributor, exhibitor—and producer. Production costs should be analysed, criticised and rationalised by students, long before any thought is given to methods of production.

In launching a Group, the organiser is advised to broadly classify members—those with and without experience—and whether they have specialist aims—scenario-writing, camerawork, directing, editing, and so on.

In the next article I will submit a Syllabus for a six month's Course, and will discuss the first subject on the list. Meanwhile, I should like to suggest that intending students, whether in Groups or individually, endeavour to acquire and study the undermentioned publications from His Majesty's Stationery Office which, collectively, provide a graphic up-to-the-minute picture of the film industry in this country together with full details of the abovementioned Quota Act.

READING LIST:

- Cinematograph Films Bill*. No. 26, 1947.
- Distribution and Exhibition of Cinematograph Films*. (1949.) A Report of the Committee of Enquiry appointed by the President of the Board of Trade.
- Report of the Working Party on Film Production Costs*. (1949.)

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

THE DOCTOR AND THE GIRL

Starring: Glenn Ford, Charles Coburn, Gloria De Haven and Janet Leigh. **Director:** Curtis Bernhardt. **Producer:** Pandro S. Berman. **Distributors:** Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

This film is based on a novel, originally written in French and then translated into English, which can best be described as a much longer and more "realist" version of *The Citadel*. I enjoyed the film much more than the novel. The story is about a young doctor whose future is planned for him by his father, an eminent surgeon. This young man disappoints his father by marrying a patient who is poor and unable to advance his career. His sister also breaks with the father and has an affair with a married man who eventually deserts her. The reconciliation between father and son begins when the daughter dies as a result of an attempted abortion, and is completed when both work over an emergency case brought into the young man's humble surgery.

The chief criticism to be made of this film is that it falls between two stools. The psychological reaction of the younger people to the father's dominating personality is rather obscured by the multiplicity of surgical operations and other medical details. The hospital background could have been introduced much less obtrusively. Otherwise it is a well-produced and interesting film.

There is a remarkable discrepancy between the summary of the story provided at the Press show and the actual film itself. In the summary, the young girl is said to "return in dire trouble. Attempting to effect a

cure by herself, she brings about an intractable haemorrhage." In the film there is no attempt to describe pregnancy as a disease and the old surgeon, a life-long friend of the family, refuses to perform an operation, though we are left in doubt whether his refusal is on Christian moral grounds or simply because it is against the law.

Mc.

PAID IN FULL

Starring: Robert Cummings, Lizabeth Scott, Diana Lynn, with Eve Arden. **Director:** William Dieterle. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 104 minutes.

"Been to the press show?" said the lady in the tea lounge. "'Eart throbs, I believe."

At first I thought Jane was going to have a baby in the car. Then I thought we were going to see a Caesarian operation. (We nearly did.) Of course we saw a flashback.

It was like this. Jane loved Bill, but Bill thought he loved her young sister, Nancy, a horrid little thing. So he married her. Being smart, the wedding was apparently Episcopalian. So, forsaking all other they took one another as long as they both should live. Final exit of clergyman. Supreme authority regarding matrimony and morals resides, it seems, with gynaecologist, psychiatrist and divorce lawyer. I must say the gynaecologist, talked some excellent sense about the sanctity of marriage and selfishness. The curious way in which it was phrased was significant of a bewildered attitude. Anyhow, nobody took any notice.

In due course Deborah is born. But a few years afterwards Nancy decides that she would like a divorce.

(Grounds? "Because living with you is dull.") Bill and Jane get thrown together. Nancy resents this. Jane leaves the house so upset that she absentmindedly runs over Deborah and kills her. Quite an accident, but Nancy rather resents it as she can't ever have another baby. (Official prohibition by gynaecologist.)

Nancy's divorce is granted. After all Bill can be boring. But Jane wants to bring them together again. You'll never guess how. Jane and Bill think how wonderful it would be to forsake all other as long as they both live. Then they remember that Bill has said that once before. I was all agog, because as a rule it's only me who remembers such things in films. What about it? "They were just words and I didn't know what they meant. Nor did Nancy." At last we know why explicit marriage vows are no longer considered binding. Now that education is universal, people don't know what words (mostly of one syllable) mean.

So Bill and Jane go to Mexico (why Mexico?) for a marriage ceremony. Not being smart this is apparently not Episcopalian. And in due course Jane expects a baby. She also expects to die. Death after childbirth is hereditary in her family. (Official pronouncement by gynaecologist.) And she has the baby. And she dies, after handing it over to Bill and Nancy. Now Bill can remarry his deceased sister-in-law's sister. Jane had been like the ham in the sandwich, between two slabs of her sister.

Them's heart throbs.

Q.

A HANDFUL OF RICE

Starring: PoChai and MeYing. A Svensk Filmindustri Production.

Directors: Paul Fejos and Gunnar Skoglund. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 70 minutes.

A beautifully photographed but somewhat slowly moving factual film telling the story of the struggle of a newly married Siamese couple to wrest a living from the soil. The marriage ceremony, the beginnings of the fight with the primeval forces of nature, the animals, all combine to make a film of considerable interest for those who

wish to know how people live in lands afar from civilisation as we know it.

V.

IT CONCERNS US ALL

Starring: Paul Reichhardt, Lily Broberg, Ilse Lil Larsen, Lisbeth Movin and Tom Rindom Thomsen. **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd. **Director:** Alice O'Fredericks. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

This is a film which is intended to make people in countries like ours realise that they have a personal responsibility, at least for charitably thinking and speaking, of the misfortunes of those in the former enemy countries. It may be that we have the duty of something more than tolerant speech, but at least there is no excuse for the Christian to utter sentiments of hatred for the children of our enemies. On them depends the future, but their training is derived from us.

The title is somewhat cumbersome though it "gets there" in one. The film is complementary to *The Search* which dealt with the plight of the lost and unwanted children of war-scarred Europe. The Danish film emphasises mainly the reaction of the people to whom the unwanted and refugee children go. The Swiss film is the better work, but the Danish picture also has many merits. It is simple and simply told. The acting, without being distinguished, is competent, the direction is firm, the sets convincing and well-photographed. Perhaps one ought to single out the performance of Ilse Lil Larsen as Leni, the 13-year-old Austrian girl who is the cause both of controversy and eventual contentment when she goes to live with a Danish family for rehabilitation. She reminds one of Margaret O'Brien, but is more developed and sure of herself. Tom Rindom Thomsen, also, as Hugo, the 13-year-old son of the house, gives a quiet and pleasing interpretation.

This is a film to see for its message as well as for its intrinsic worth. Do not be one of those who say: "I do not like having to think about these things!" It was made especially for you!

V.



... a comedy of Lancashire manners

THE CURE FOR LOVE

Starring: Robert Donat, with Renee Asherson, Marjorie Rhodes, Charles Victor, Dora Ryan, Thora Hird, and Gladys Henson.
Producer and Director: Robert Donat. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

If I call this comedy "broad", I risk being misunderstood by both the rigorists and the laxists. It is a film which our American friends will doubtless designate "objectionable" for the same reason that *Henry V* and *Hamlet* (parts of) were so described. That is to say, dialogue and situation (parts of) are "Shakespearean" in their use of the English tongue and the human body. Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet are not considered fit companions for an

audience brought up on Mickey Rooney and Virginia Mayo.

It would, of course, be gross mendacity to suggest that the connection of Greenwood (author of *The Cure for Love*) with Shakespeare (author of *Hamlet*) is anything more than a coincidentally similar use of the same language and gestures. As for language, there may be some who will question this connection. My knowledge of Lancashire (described as "English") by one of the characters in the film) is too slender to allow me to savour all the asides of the salty characters, but I am confident that even those educated by the B.B.C. will find much to smile at in this raucous comedy of Lancashire manners.

The soldier who returns to find his fiancée apparently still faithful, whereas he wants an excuse to change over to his mother's London evacuee, is the centre of much intriguing and

Robert Donat's soldier
is an endearing gorm



manoeuvring until he discovers that his girl's "fidelity" is the consequence of being jilted by three war-time boy friends.

Robert Donat's soldier is an endearing gorm and Renee Asherson a charming Londoner, but the palms go in my opinion to Marjorie Rhodes and Charles Victor, both comedians of skill and experience. The one as a horny but soft-hearted Lancashire mother, the other a genial landlord of the local pub

with an eye on the main chance, give warm and rounded performances. Dora Bryan and Gladys Henson are a shade too theatrical as the designing and blowsy "fiancée" and her mother, but they, together with the rest of the cast, will win the approval of the provincials for whom this film is unblushingly intended. Its transition from the stage is an obvious one, but it is none the less welcome for that.

V.

SAND

Starring: Mark Stevens, Coleen Gray, Rory Calhoun. **Director:** Louis King. **Producer:** Robert Bassler. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 74 minutes.

Jubilee (a horse) is bound for California. While en route, the train catches fire and causes such shock to Jubilee's nervous system, that (as Californians would say) it goes "nuts".

This horsie keeps its tail and its "tale" up for 74 minutes. I was

grateful for the vistas of lovely scenery, but during the rest of the film I was restive.

For some time I acted as chaplain to a mental hospital and watching the antics of the mentally deranged (even animals) is not my line of fun.

But please do not be put off by my personal reaction. In its own line, it is passably good and has a certain charm for those who like horses and heroes and the wide wild open spaces and a nice bit of rope work. The film is well made. The acting is adequate.

E.

The Rocking Horse Winner

Starring: Valerie Hobson, John Mills,
John Howard Davies and Ronald
Squire. A Two Cities Film.
Director: Anthony Pelissier.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 85 minutes.

eerie discovery that he can foretell the names of winning horses by furiously riding his rocking horse does not make a very successful film. This fantastic subject needs either a positively pagan or superstitiously Christian approach. The latter is the more acceptable to those who hold that the defects of Christian belief are at least an



. . . John Howard
Davies discovers that
he can foretell the
names of winning
horses

D. H. Lawrence's unpleasant story about the little boy whose devotion to his spendthrift mother leads to his

indication of a decline from orthodoxy. As it is, the polite indifference to either Christian morals or belief

implicit in the characters in this story make the fantastic element the more irrational.

John Mills' production is interesting and the acting of a high quality, but the direction is never convincing and the film consequently never comes alive. It is worth seeing for those who wish to study the rôle of the cinema as teacher of ethics. The censor insisted that a compensating element be added to the film, and so the money which the thoughtless mother has inherited by the devotion and through the death of her little boy has to be devoted to "a good cause". This, it seems to me, is to rob the story of its only trace of ethical value, for without the contrived "moral" ending it stood as an awful parable of the empty horror of materialistic paganism.

However, do not let my remarks prevent you from seeing an interesting film, especially if you are among those who take the cinema seriously. The acting of John Howard Davies is most appealing and John Mills adds a delightful study as a Suffolk groom to his long list of carefully devised film characters.

Above all, do notice a perfect miniature by Charles Goldner as a Greek moneylender.

V.

TARZAN'S MAGIC FOUNTAIN

Starring: Lex Barker, Brenda Joyce, with Albert Dekker, Evelyn Ankers, Charles Drake. **Producer:** Sol Lesser. **Director:** Lee Sholem. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 71 minutes.

If your fancy (and a little bit of what you fancy is the best medicine) runs to fantasy and a little playful nonsense, go ahead and drink as much as you need from *Tarzan's Magic Fountain*. I promise you that you will not be poisoned. And if ever you have dreamed of perennial youth, I promise you that for 71 minutes you will live vicariously and gloriously. And if you like your Tarzans tough, talented and handsome, Lex Barker will measure up to your demand. And if you like apes who do good tricks, you will (as the lady next door says) "simply adore Cheta".

E.

TASK FORCE

Starring: Gary Cooper, with Jane Wyatt, Wayne Morris and Walter Brennan. A Warner Bros. Film. **Director:** Delmer Davies. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 105 minutes approx.

This is a story of war as seen from American eyes, told in flashback, in which the technical excellence of editing and masterly incutting of blown-up air-gun film, together with news-reel shots during the second half of the film, so captivate the senses as to obliterate for a time the painful memories of the earlier half. The story, told with exasperating tedium, is the old one about thwarted ambition in official circles. This time it is the American Navy's unwillingness to regard the training of air pilots and the provision of air carriers as anything more than cranky. This provides Gary Cooper with the opportunity of smiling his slow smile in navy blue and proving how nearly the U.S.A. lost the war to Japan.

The film covers a period of 25 years during which Gary grows from whimsical youth to kindly grey hairs. His wife has the secret of perpetual youth: only the fashions change.

It is entirely American in feeling and leaves the Englishman a little lost in a world in which the war begins on December 7th, 1941, and appears to be fought out in the Pacific. Since it was made by and for Americans, it would be unbalanced to press the point.

A change to Technicolour half way through, though unexpected, has the effect of increasing both interest and tension. The coloured shots of bursting torpedoes and fighting planes are most impressive and the brilliant photography of the news-reel men creates a sense of actuality hitherto unmatched in my experience in war films.

The players are adequate without being more. Gary Cooper's pleasing personality survives any film treatment. Jane Wyatt is charming. Walter Brennan, without a beard or a drawl, is first class as the stimulating element in Gary's career in the Navy. Altogether, a good film once you get to

the war. The noise and the sights of wounded men may make this film frightening for some youngsters, hence the B Category.

V.

HOLIDAY AFFAIR

Starring: Robert Mitchum, Janet Leigh, Wendell Corey, with Gordon Gebert. **Producer** and **Director:** Don Hartman. **Distributors:** R.K.O. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 87 minutes.

The war widow, wedded to the past, her beloved small boy, her rival suitors, both respectable but not equally "romantic"—these are all signposts to a well beaten track. And for long enough the film is commonplace. Not until Christmas Day is reached does it really acquire originality and humour which it never quite loses.

Gordon Gebert is not too unpleasant as screen children go and the picture provides an innocent way of passing the time. But don't worry if you arrive quite a bit late.

Q.

THE STORY OF A RING

Distributors: Film Traders Ltd. **Director:** Boris Dolin. **Photography:** B. Asmus. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 35 minutes.

This Russian documentary film tells of the migrations of birds, particularly a family of storks, whose story we follow from the time when an injured stork is taken in and cared for by a Ukrainian farmer until, the new family raised and the yearly cycle repeated, the nesting place is destroyed in the war.

The photography is among the most beautiful I have seen and the script is so well written that what might easily have been merely a well-made factual film becomes an exciting nature story. This is a film that all children will like and also any grown-up who is wise enough to recognise something good.

V.

JOLSON SINGS AGAIN

Starring: Larry Parks, Barbara Hale.

A Columbia Picture. **Director:**

Henry Levin. *Certificate:* U.

Category: B. *Running time:*

85 minutes approx.

Those who cared for the *Jolson Story* will not mind if he sings again especially as the sequel is rather better than the original. Larry Parks brings off an astonishing synchronisation to Jolson's voice. The story frankly accepts the fact of the impersonation and deals simply enough with the later career of the man whose appalling voice singing "Sonny Boy" was the signal for a tidal wave of raucous sound to break over the cinema screens of the world.

Sentimentality is ladled out generously, mixed inevitably with the break-up of marriage and the patchwork of divorce which is warp to the woof of modern non-Catholic life.

V.

YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING

Starring: Dan Dailey, Anne Baxter,

Anne Revere, Shari Robinson.

Director: Walter Lang. **Producer:**

Lamar Trotti. A 20th Century-

Fox Picture. *Certificate:* U.

Category: C. *Running time:*

94 minutes.

This is the sort of film that is always popular in a modest sort of way, even if you would not go out of your way to see it unless you particularly followed one of the stars who shine in it. It really has a bit of everything, from the footlights to the fireside. It is in technicolor, there is a child star quite up to standard, and we hear again some of the old songs that were popular twenty years ago.

The story turns mainly on the effect of the introduction of sound films, and what they did to some of the silent stars. One of them, Anne Baxter, is not sorry to be released so that she can educate her daughter, Shari Robinson, like other children. But father, played

by Dan Dailey, a song and dance man who came into his own with the talkies, is not co-operative, and Shari eventually makes her name as a star in her own right. But it all comes right in the end, with everyone in everyone else's arms, a climax brought about mainly through the machinations of Aunt Jane, alias Anne Revere. If nothing more needs to be said that in itself is a recommendation.

U.

A STRANGER WALKED IN

Starring: John Hodiak, Sylvia Sidney, Ann Richards, with John Howard, Isobel Elsom. **Producer:** James J. Geller. **Director:** Richard Whorf. A Renown Hollywood Production. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 81 minutes.*

What with other work and making a retreat, I was quite a stranger when I walked into the cinema. And the names of Frank Vosper and Agatha Christie among the technical credits led me to look forward to an enjoyable thriller.

The film was described as "suspense drama". But from the first moment that the criminal appeared, he seemed to spare no pains, short of reading the *Wife-Murderer's Handbook*, to make it obvious not only to the audience but to his wife that he was a notorious wife-murderer. A police notice said he had fair hair, but might have dyed (this appears as "died"!!!) it. So he brings out a bottle of dye. And so on. And so forth. For one wild moment I thought perhaps he wasn't the criminal after all and we had been rather cleverly led up the garden. Alas no.

When he started digging a grave in the cellar, after telling his wife on no account to go down there, a lady behind me whispered: "I suppose he's going to do her in". But I had been to the pictures before and knew that villains don't murder leading ladies. And though he eluded the handcuffs—Scotland Yard being nearly as dumb as his wife—he got in the way of a carrier's dray and his wife-murdering career was done.

Most of this goes on in Devonshire in 1901. So stage rustics group themselves about and talk in the American idea of dialect, in which Somerset and Yorkshire get hideously intertwined.

Crude.

Q.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS' FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Kindly send donation to:

Rev. J. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

BICYCLE THIEVES

Starring: Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola, Lllanella Carell, Gino Saltamerenda. **Director:** Vittorio De Sica. **Producer:** Umberto Scarpelli. **Distributors:** G. C. T. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

This film has quality and importance.

(i)

Its Quality

Its quality derives from the nature of its story, simple and rich in human interest and told vividly with restraint and sincerity. It is about Antonio, an unemployed, who is offered a job, with the proviso, that he provides his own bicycle . . . Maria, his wife, makes the sacrifice of her bed linen and

Antonio "redeems" his bike from the pawn shop . . . All is about to work out nicely when Antonio's bike is stolen . . . Antonio makes a frantic search for his bike, but in vain . . . He is an honest fellow, but rather than endure the poverty and degradation of further unemployment he *steals* a bicycle. Hardly a story, you may say, to set the Tiber and the Thames on fire; however, the quality of the film lies in the way the story is used to expose the social sin of unemployment. (For those who may wonder "what's all this fuss about unemployment", I record that today there are nearly two million unemployed in Italy.)

De Sica, the man who directs the film, is an artist. Like every true artist he has something to say and he knows how to say it. He does not waste his celluloid: in his hands every

Antonio "redeems" his bicycle and gets a job



Father
(Antonio)
and
Son
(Bruno)



character comes alive (notice, in particular, Antonio and Bruno) and every scene fits into the story. De Sica understands his problem and his people to such a degree that we share his sympathy and understanding. He avoids sentimentality, but the film is not without sentiment, which is restrained and therefore more persuasive. "Art is to conceal art."

There are some bitter things in this film, but the problem is bitter; one has to live among the poor, who have had no chance of education, to realise how religion and superstition get mixed up. While the writer of this review was in Liverpool, an Election was running and many of our people voted for the Communists, and when we asked them why, they told us that they thought Communists (they pronounced the word "Commune-ists") were people who went to daily Communion. I cannot believe that De Sica is making any direct attack on the Catholic religion, but I can imagine people who veer to the left saying, "Ha . . . ha . . . didn't I tell you that religion was the dope of the people". I would prefer to believe that the pain of this problem has made De Sica impatient.

(ii)

Its Importance

Bicycle Thieves is an important film because it proves that to make a first

class film a lot of money is not necessary. It cost £9,000 against £25,000 which is the average cost of a feature film, yet it surpasses most feature films. Wherefore I am correct in describing "*Bicycle Thieves*" as the triumph of mind over money. Such a work as this, should give heart to The Catholic Film Institute which is poor but eager to make first-class films.

Bicycle Thieves is important, also, because it has debunked the star-system. The box-office returns of this film prove that the general public prefer people who can act, to stars who merely glitter. I am not suggesting that all our stars are dumb, but it is well known that many of them are selected for their face and torso values and their glamour and glitter.

In this film all the players except one are unknown amateurs and were chosen for their dramatic value, so I hope I am not being funny if I also describe this film as the triumph of the unknown over the known.

I thought the biggest thieves of the piece were Lamberto Maggiorani and Enzo Staiola. I mean thieves in the sense that they stole the picture.

This is a film to see and to discuss and then see again.

E.

THE HOLY YEAR CINEMA PILGRIMAGE

One of the most interesting of the manifestations during the Holy Year in Rome will be the International Cinema Pilgrimage. Catholic members of the profession, executives, technicians, players, writers, will come together to pay their homage to the Holy Father and to demonstrate their sense of responsibility as Catholics for the betterment of the cinema. It will be a great consolation to the Church to have the presence of active workers in this powerful medium and the assurance that they will endeavour to use this medium only for good and not for the destruction of social and spiritual values.

The International Catholic Cinema

Office (O.C.I.C.) has been entrusted with the organisation of the gigantic witness of faith. The National Centres in their turn have the task of organising the pilgrimage within their own countries. The Catholic Film Institute, therefore, must do its best to make sure that the representation from England is as full and complete as possible. We hope that all who are interested will at once make an effort to plan their year so that they can be free to join us in Rome during May 25th-30th, 1950.

Preliminary enquiries to: The Secretary, Holy Year Pilgrimage, 20 Ovington Square, London, S.W.3.

THE C.F.I. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The attendance at the A.G.M. was disappointing; it was a wet day and it was in London and it was a week-end . . . still, we would like to have seen more of our members and well-wishers.

After the Honorary Secretary had read his report the Chairman, the Very Rev. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., emphasised that the greater part of the work of the C.F.I. was voluntary and in this connection expressed the thanks of all present to the Honorary Secretary and to Mrs. Moultrie for the devoted work which they performed for the Catholic Film Institute. In particular, they owed a special debt to Mrs. Moultrie for allowing her house to be used for so long as an office. In speaking of the urgent need of spreading knowledge of the work of the C.F.I. and of its work, the Chairman appealed to those living outside London to make every effort to form regional sections or film societies.

In mentioning the work of the Editor of *Focus*, Father Declan Flynn, O.F.M., the Chairman said that great gratitude was owed to him and to the priests who carried out the arduous and often distasteful task of film-reviewing with such loyalty and devotion. An American priest, with whom he had recently been talking, was extremely impressed with *Focus* and the way it was doing its work. Yet Mrs. Moultrie had informed him that of the specimen copies of *Focus* which she had recently sent to the dioceses of Lancaster and Portsmouth, not a single one produced any response. It was necessary to "sell" *Focus* in the American sense of the word as well as in the financial sense.

The Chairman also expressed the wish that greater use be made of lectures and conferences which the officials of the C.F.I. were willing to arrange. Much useful work is being done in this connection, but there is room for more, and perhaps in this field there was room for efforts by members who did not find it easy to help in any other way. To organise

lectures and meetings was most useful but it had to be done by those outside the London area and they had to see to it that the officers of the C.F.I. were invited to give shows or arrange lectures and discussions. With the rapid growth of the Film Library, there was room for greater development in this direction and he thanked Father Young in particular for the film shows which he organised so successfully.

The Chairman also spoke of the Fatima film and said that the keenest interest in it had spread throughout the world. There was no doubt that when it was realised that the C.F.I. was producing good professional standard films, people would be eager and willing to see them. Ten copies of the Walsingham film had been bought by the Foreign Office for use in America. This was an indication that we could confidently hope to influence the cinema-going public to appreciate good films for their own sake even if they were markedly Catholic in character.

Father Hilary Carpenter ended by saying that the C.F.I. could not continue merely by the efforts of those on the spot. Unless support from the provinces was accorded, the C.F.I. would die out.

The second part of the A.G.M., open to the general public, was under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. Mgr. G. L. Craven, M.C., Bishop of Sebastopolis, who deputised for His Eminence Cardinal Griffin. In speaking of the necessity for the increase in the influence and circulation of *Focus*, Bishop Craven said that he had been particularly instructed by His Eminence to say as much as possible about *Focus*. It had His Eminence's highest praise and blessing. His Lordship appealed for financial assistance for the C.F.I. which was, he said, performing a vital work.

Andrew Buchanan, the well-known documentary producer, gave an address on the position of the religious film which will be given in full in a later issue of this magazine.

INSTITUTE NOTES

"Focus" Film Course

We hope our readers will take full advantage of the Course which Andrew Buchanan inaugurates in this issue. It should be possible to organise small groups for discussion in many provincial and other centres who will make it their business to study the subject matter of each lecture in the company of a technically equipped person. The important thing, however, is not to rush the Course. It will probably be possible to make a practical summary of the Course at a Summer School later in the year. Write to us for help if you need it. But it is up to you to start the ball rolling.

Summer School

We are determined to make this year's effort a residential Summer School. It has been pointed out that a residential School is so much more attractive. It is also so much more difficult to organise. It is too early to give precise details yet, but we are aiming at a five day course in the first part of August, probably in the Tunbridge Wells area. As far as you can, please try to keep that time in mind for the C.F.I. Summer School.

Film Competition

Entries were disappointing. In fact, only one! It was probably due to the fact that the competition was announced after the summer had finished. The object of this rush was to have some idea of the enthusiasm available for our training scheme. If we are to take entries as indicative, that means no enthusiasm. We refuse to believe that. The competition is renewed, therefore, and details of the new conditions will be published in the next issue. We are looking to our readers for the recruits who will keep the Catholic Film Apostolate alive and developing.

Fatima Film

The long and wearying business of editing, taking extra shots, writing the commentary, music, recording, etc., is occupying those concerned with the pilgrimage film. It will be May before it is ready for the Premiere. It is not too early to start organising support for the film in your district. Remember what you did to get *Monsieur Vincent* shown in places it would never otherwise have seen.

Film Library

It will be noticed, we hope, that we are gradually extending and adding to our Film Library. In addition to our own films, we are now in a position to secure any film on any of the well-known distributors' lists. We shall be glad to be of service in this way.

Monk shows his own film

Fr. Detry's lecture and film show which was advertised in our last issue was most successful . . . and unique. It was impossible to admit the very many people who came without tickets.

Very Rev. Fr. Hilary introduced the lecturer.

B.B.C. and The Catholic Film Institute

On January 23rd the B.B.C. featured:

A Medieval Disputation on "The Cinema is the highest form of art".

Very Rev. Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., Chairman of The Catholic Film Institute defended this thesis in an admirable manner. It may be possible to give a summary of this "Disputation" in next issue of Focus.

Focus offers its congratulations to Fr. Hilary, to Cyril Cusack who introduced the feature and to Very Rev. Fr. John Baptist Reeves, O.P. (the objector), to the Very Rev. Fr. Wykeham-George, O.P. (Moderator), and to those in the audience who contributed to this interesting feature.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On Behalf of the Girls

Sir,

On receiving the last issue of *Focus* I was requested to write on behalf of the girls of the Leader's Group in appreciation of your magazine. *Focus* has proved most helpful in the school, especially to the Literature Group, which issues each week a brief review on the films showing at Newcastle theatres. *Focus* itself, is placed on the notice board and the girls take a great interest in it.

However, although *Focus* is greatly appreciated by the older girls in third, fourth and fifth year, the younger ones sometimes find the reviews difficult to understand fully. Therefore, a simpler wording of the articles would prove more helpful to girls of all ages.

Yours respectfully,

JULIANA GREENWOOD.

St. Aloysius' Girls' High School,
Hamilton,
Newcastle,
N.S.W.

(Thank you, Juliana, for your nice words. It would help us considerably if the older girls would explain the more difficult bits to the younger girls. —Editor.)

"Focus" in Berlin

Sir,

You may be interested in the following excerpt from a letter received recently from a German student living in the American sector of Berlin.

"I thank you for the two numbers of *Focus* and your offer to send more of this very good review. I rejoice particularly that I will know the scenario of the film, which is very much spoken of before it is on the screen (*The Divine Tragedy*). We were able to circulate my copies and they who read *Focus* felt as enthusiastic about it as I did."

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET ANDERSON.

2 Avenue Road, E.7.

Double Service

Sir,

Allow me to take this opportunity of offering my sincere congratulations on the consistent excellence of your review. It is doing a double service:

1. By constructive criticism, injecting necessary bursts of primed plasma into the reviving body of a great art; and

2. Satisfying a vital desire by Catholics and all responsible picture-goers throughout the world, for solid and dependable reviews in the light of the moral law.

This service you are doing well. The Motion Picture World owes you a deep debt.

Focus has won enthusiastic praise from our critics and newspapers here in New Zealand. Our Catholic periodicals have regularly repeated strong recommendations to their readers to subscribe to "that excellent magazine" . . .

BRIAN FENTON.

43 Morton Street,
Invercargill,
New Zealand.

Yeast!

Sir,

I know that you must have received many messages of congratulation on the wonderful work you are doing, in your strenuous efforts to bring the Christian mind to the appreciation, criticism and interest of the film, but let me add my humble praise and the confident hope that one day your institute will be instrumental in leavening the Film Industry with the wholesome yeast of Christianity.

(Rev.) P. M. BOHAN.

St. Patrick's Cathedral,
Ballarat,
Victoria,
Australia.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

By

CHARLES TOOMEY

Making this picture has been an absorbing and revealing experience—not a little humbling also. I have learned a great deal—about religious congregations, community life, the nature of the missionary's vocation and the stupendous task that faces the modern evangelist. I speak, of course, as a layman; the religious is welcome to smile at the naïveté of these statements since they will rather less than compensate for my earlier misconceptions of 'a way of life that seemed admirable in proportion as it was incomprehensible. It is difficult at this stage for one who has never been in doubt about the non-existence of a vocation in himself to avoid sentimentality in one direction or another. The only unsentimental people in this respect are religious themselves.

In common with many Catholics I tended to regard the religious life as a counsel of perfection towards which I was quite unattracted. The prime requirement seemed to be holiness (a rather vague quality in which I was entirely deficient), and its corollary, a rather humourless repudiation of one's humanity. The religious life demanded such sacrifices and set such standards that it almost seemed like spending one's whole life outside the confessional accusing oneself of one's faults, meditating on the four last things, living a hard and blameless life in the hope of eternal salvation. And while one found cause for

wonder and admiration in the spectacle of people submitting to such a circumscribing of their abilities and activities, the very fact seemed to remove them from the category of ordinary human beings, so that one felt it could not really be such a difficult life for them. At the same time it was always rather disconcerting and seemed somewhat unfair to those of us who remained exposed to the cares and riches and pleasures of this world each time we pondered our own chances of salvation. The religious were always so depressingly humble in estimating their own.

Well, I hope I know better now, thanks to the opportunity which the making of this picture gave me of studying the religious state at relatively close quarters. I hope, too, that I may be forgiven the tediousness of this recantation: it is so silly and illogical to be as astonished as I was to find some of the sanest and most balanced, as well as the happiest and most cheerful and sympathetic people I have met—some of my most valued friends also—among people in religion.

However, I am supposed to be writing about the making of this picture and not about my own reactions, past and present, to the religious state, or the people who have chosen it. My association with the Holy Rosary Sisters began the day I met Sister Mary Dominic. That was in Dublin, in July 1947,

when I happened to be addressing a Summer School in film appreciation organised by the National Film Institute of Ireland. She was one of the students attending the course at the conclusion of which she showed a film which the Sisters had made themselves dealing with their missionary activities in Nigeria. It was a silent, 16mm. film, shot on reversal stock, absorbingly interesting but considerably worn, too much so to make it worth the trouble of trying to take copies of it. Most of it had been shot before the War and the Sisters had decided it was time to replace it. We discussed the production of the proposed film at some length. I was invited to assist in the preparation of the script, and finally, after further discussion, I was asked to undertake the production and direction of the new film as well.

Followed seven months' study of Nigeria and its peoples, exhaustive cross-examinations of returned missionaries and finally there emerged a treatment and a script—a very elastic script, for the amount of material was formidable, and none of our unit had ever been to Africa before. The very vagueness of the African script was a blessing, for Africa cannot be described, is never what one expects and is never quite the same. But we had quite enough to do in Ireland to keep us occupied for the time being, so we concentrated on the Irish sequences. Sister Mary Dominic became guide, philosopher and friend, and finally unit manager, and in August 1948 we began shooting the Irish sequences which aimed at giving a brief history of the Congregation as well as the factors and the training that make the missionary. Most of these sequences were shot at Killeshandra in the Mother House of

the Congregation. It was the most pleasant film-making I have ever done. We literally turned the Convent inside out, upset everyone's routine, made the usual impossible demands, did the usual amount of hasty and inconsiderate damage and failed utterly either to shake the Sister's imperturbable calm, or awe them by our cinematic ju-ju. I think, of course, it was the vow of obedience that made my task so easy and so pleasant, and the result on the screen so simple and refreshing. It is a great pity it cannot be incorporated on all studio contracts.

By October we were ready for the African sequences. I remember well the murky afternoon our small unit set out from Liverpool and the devastating contrast of Lagos when we arrived there towards the end of November. The story of our subsequent adventures is too long to relate here. In April 1949, just as the rains were commencing, we finished shooting our last sequence and headed back for Europe with 30,000 feet of negative, our camera out of action, weary, triumphant and three months overdue.

The film is very largely an Irish production. It was shot by Pat Butler, undoubtedly the finest cameraman in Ireland today, under difficult conditions throughout. Even the most rudimentary studio facilities were unobtainable for the African sequences which form the major portion of the film. The camera used throughout was a Newman Sinclair Model E. The music was specially written by Eamonn O. Gallchobhair, one of our most distinguished composers, and played by the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra. Co-operation between the Post Office authorities on both sides enabled us to transmit the music from the Phoenix Hall, Dublin, by P.O. lines.

to London where it was recorded on the film under the supervision of Dennis Scanlan. Three choirs are featured in the film, the Choir of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Kimmage, Our Lady's Choral Society, Dublin, and the Holy Rosary Sisters themselves. In making reference to these

facts, however, it would be ungracious to omit mention of the British Colonial Office and the Central Office of Information, to both of whom we owe a debt of gratitude for information, advice and assistance afforded us during the making of *Out of the Darkness*.

MY ADVICE TO WOULD-BE SCREEN STARS

By MARGARET LOCKWOOD

"Don't put your daughter on the stage, Mrs. Worthington, don't put your daughter on the stage," is one of my favourite Noel Coward songs. Its catchy little tune comes into my head whenever a woman asks me how *her* daughter should start a screen or theatrical career.

It is a question that comes to me at least six times a week, by letter, phone or by word of mouth now that my daughter, Margaret Julia (known to all, it now seems, by my nickname of Toots) has appeared with me in two films.

The question of whether it was wise to allow Toots to start making films at the age of four is often raised. Personally, I would rather she had waited a little before starting. It gave me a great shock to find that Toots already rated her own fan mail letters, after *The White Unicorn*—somehow it seems ridiculous that at five, when her schooling is just

beginning, she should be receiving fan letters.

But my hand was forced, because having seen Toots at the studios with me, producers felt that only she could play Margaret Lockwood's film daughter. They took one look at her features and said, "But she's extremely like you". It is something I can never see myself, except that we have the same eyes. But they pleaded with me, saying that production time would be wasted if they had to test hundreds of youngsters, supposed to be like me, to see whether they could act.

They preferred to risk Toots, hoping that she could act. I can assure you that of the two of us in *The White Unicorn* I was the more nervous. At one time I almost dried up, only to find young Toots prompting me out of the corner of her mouth. Everybody agreed that she had a natural gift for acting, and

appearing completely at ease in front of the camera.

So my daughter started her acting career at four and now loves every moment of filming, although the crowds that greeted the stars at the Royal Command Performance made her grip my hand even tighter and whisper, "I don't think I want to be a star after all, Mummy!"

Now that she has had her fling, so to speak, I would rather she continued being a normal little girl, with school holidays and toys to claim most of her interests. Later, when she is better able to judge just whether she is able to stand up to the strain and the responsibility that acting brings, I shall leave her completely free to choose for herself.

Ideally I think the best training for any actor or actress, whether going on the stage or screen, is a couple of years or more in repertory. So many of our best actors today have learned their technique this hard way. Such names as Stewart Granger, Michael Redgrave, Celia Johnson and Rosamund John spring to mind immediately. There are hundreds more.

After this training (or alternatively a couple of years at a good dramatic school) the question of luck comes into it. That is why I shall warn Toots strongly against acting before she takes the final decision. I shall say that however good she is, luck will play an important part in her career. Therefore she must have a great deal of determination and courage to overcome the initial difficulties that she will have to face.

I seem to have wandered a little in this advice to mothers who see in their children the actors and actresses of tomorrow. I suppose that is inevitable because my child is so near my thoughts especially in a subject like this. Still let me enumerate the vital points.

First essential is an ability to act. Then a child should be taught the

importance of good posture, walk, gestures, health and appearance—the latter *can* be influenced in early days, with good food, hair brushing and frequent visits to the dentist to make sure teeth are straight and strong.

Then at seventeen or eighteen, possibly a little later, either a couple of years dramatic training or repertory work. The latter is heart-breaking hard, but the best in the world. Apart from the actual training in a wide variety of parts, juvenile, comedy, character and so on, the difficulty of keeping up with a new play every week will be a vital part in forming character. Repertory either makes or breaks a would-be actor.

Then the question of luck. Being seen in the right places helps. Also it is essential to look right—as if there were a possibility of being seen by a future employer.

For those hoping to specialise in screen acting, there is good news. The J. Arthur Rank Organisation has a training ground for would be screen stars. This is the Company of Youth, where fencing, exercise, posture, elocution and dramatics are among the subjects in the curriculum.

Young actors and actresses in repertory are spotted by the Organisation's talent scouts and, if a screen test indicates that they have possibilities, then they are signed up.

It is a hard life but a good one, I would say to mothers who ask me for advice, and there is still plenty of room at the top. But I wonder whether I have any right to advise them to take a career that has more heartbreak in it than perhaps any other.

Or is my firm "No" to the question "Do you regret being a star?" sufficient encouragement for any future talent?

(By courtesy of the Rank Organisation.)

Physical Education Films and Strips

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

G.B. Film Library, Aintree Road,
Perivale, Greenford, Middx.
Common Ground, Sydney Place, S.W.7.

FILMS

ANALYSIS OF AGILITY EXERCISES

F.646, G.B.I. 1 reel, silent. Hire : 4 6
first day, 1/6 subsequent days;
sound, 7/6 first day, 2/6 extra days.

In this film children of about 7 to 9 years old demonstrate, while a commentator describes, the steps in teaching some basic agility exercises. All the essential points in building up the movement are shown most clearly (in slow motion when this is helpful), the descriptions are brief and to the point, and come at just the right moment. Starting with crouch jump, showing how, with shoulders directly over the hands, the weight is lifted, first on the spot, then moving forward, and later over a low rope, it progresses to cat spring; hop, step and jump; forward and backward rolls, through vault and astride vault and finishes up, with handstands and cartwheels. In each case it starts from the very easy stage that every child can attempt, and each progression is built on the last so that confidence and skill develop automatically until the movement is finally done over apparatus. To see this done so well by these children should certainly spur on any class and encourage any teacher.

SWIMMING: THE CRAWL

G.B.I., F.665, FS.665. 1 reel. Hire :
same as above.

The cameras take these shots just below the surface of the water, exactly level with the swimmer's body so that the poise of the body and each move-

ment are perfectly clear. The film concentrates firstly on the leg stroke, with its relaxed knees, in-turned toes and rhythmic beat, touching on the variations used by different swimmers, next the arm movement with its strong underwater pull to the middle line of the body, the part the wrist plays in the stroke and then the slow recovery of the arms just clearing the water. The third part shows the head turn for breathing, done without rolling the body, on either side, depending on the swimmer's preference, but always in perfect rhythm. It finishes with a group of people crossing a swimming pool all doing a beautiful crawl but showing several personal variations. This film should be most helpful to anyone either learning or teaching the stroke.

TENNIS

H. W. Austin : A personal demonstration of his style and method of play. G.B.I., F.575, FM.575. 1 reel.
Hire : same as above.

The outstanding quality of Austin's play was always his perfect and easy style, which makes him the ideal person to demonstrate tennis strokes and foot work.

Each stroke is taken in turn and its essential parts made clear, often in slow motion. The position of the body, the preparatory swing, the place of impact of ball on racquet, the follow-through, the transference of weight from one foot to the other—the whole timing is shown in a way only possible in a film of this sort. Each stroke is repeated from various angles sufficiently often to leave a very clear impression. In the part dealing with service, there is a helpful section on foot faults and the commentary is extremely good.

PROGRESSIVE TRAINING IN BALL-HANDLING GAMES

G.B.I., F.620, FM.620. Hire : same as above.

This is a very comprehensive demonstration of how skill with a ball can be developed according to the age and capacity of various classes of children. It starts with games suitable for 4-5 year olds in an Infant School before they are ready for team games. Their aim is plenty of action and enjoyment. Skill increases and the 7-8 year olds practise in pairs, throwing as well as catching. The next class shows a marked development. Their games require footwork and the ability to judge the angle and spin of the ball; they can throw harder. A class of 8 year old boys are shown starting football, while girls of the same age group play skittle ball. The games for the 9-10 year group aim at developing accuracy and facility in handling the ball—a ball and rope relay race is shown, and lower ball, a useful preparation for Netball. Towards the end of the film a rather restricted playground is shown, every available inch of space being used to the best advantage with several different games going on at the same time. Here the boys of 10-11 play a very good game of Ringby touch, while the girls play Netball. There is a great deal in this film, so much that to benefit from it fully, it should be seen more than once, preferably several times.

CARRIAGE

G.B.I., F.616, FM.616. 1 reel. Hire : same as above.

A small girl aged about 3 has the main muscle groups involved in holding the body erect marked on her in some dark colour, and she demonstrates how they work with the easy natural movements of childhood. As the commentator points out, very young children are generally perfectly upright. It is later, when so many hours of the day are spent in sitting, at desks, in buses, at meals, that some muscles become stretched and weak and others shortened so that erect posture is no longer natural and easy. Children are shown how to counteract these bad effects while still in their desks, by occasionally stretching their legs

straight out in front of them, by bending the head and shoulders back over the top of the seat, and by tautening the slack abdominal muscles. This is a very helpful film on an important subject because it has a bearing on so many others.

OUR NORMAL DAY

G.B.I., C.784, CM.784. Hire : same as above.

This is a film intended to appeal to youths and girls who, having left school, can so easily lose the physical fitness they enjoyed there, spending all their leisure time in cinemas or in night-clubs. It shows the sort of thing they might do to improve their health and enjoyment of life. Keep Fit Classes of various kinds, athletic training and sports. The aimlessness, the dreariness, and the milling crowds of "our normal day" are presented so realistically (and rather depressingly) that the remedy that most immediately suggests itself is a long, quiet holiday as far away as possible. But no doubt the weekly or twice-weekly class in pleasant surroundings, or to music, or more vigorous according to taste, is a more likely remedy in the long run.

FILM STRIPS

Common Ground Physical Education Series, made in collaboration with the Ling Physical Education Association and the National Association of Organisers and Lecturers in Physical Education.

The advantage of these strips as far as games are concerned is that each shot of positions, etc., can be held and studied. In a moving film, the action of the players is often too swift to be of value to a child.

HOCKEY

C.G.A., B.435. Price : 15/-.

The chief value of this strip is that it gives the progressive stages in picture of the different strokes used in the game. This should be of great help to children who can get a correct view of a player's head and body positions with the correct footwork for each stroke. The strip also includes positioning at the beginning of the game, during a corner, etc., which would be of use to beginners.

Suitability : all ages.

NETBALL

C.G.A., B.177. Price : as above.

This should be quite useful to beginners at the game as it shows the more elementary work of positions and how to play the ball.

POSTURE

C.G.A., B.176. Price : as above.

This strip shows the usual pictures of comparison between good and bad positions. There are also some anatomical diagrams which help children to realise the importance of a good posture in relation to their health, apart from the better appearance it naturally gives. The treatment of the

subject is very elementary and suitable for young children.

Physical Education Films and Strips reviewed in September, 1948 :

TENNIS.—3 sound films, made by Dunlops, Sound Services Ltd.
No charge.

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Making the Ball.

Making the Racket.

CRICKET.—Strips, Dawn Trust. 10 - each.

Wicket-Keeping.

Batting.

SAILING.—Strip, Dawn Trust. Price as above.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. II, No. 12, and VOL. III, No. 1)

<i>Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer</i>	(B) (346)
<i>Any Number can Play</i>	(A) (21)
<i>A Run for Your Money</i>	(C) (20)
<i>A Stranger Walked In</i>	(A) (11)
<i>Big Steal, The</i>	(B) (339)
<i>Come to the Stable</i>	(C) (12)
<i>Countess of Monte Cristo, The</i>	(A) (11)
<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	(A) (10)
<i>Crooked Way, The</i>	(A) (346)
<i>East of Java</i>	(A) (350)
<i>Everybody Does It</i>	(B) (338)
<i>File on Thelma Jordan, The</i>	(A) (339)
<i>Forsyte Saga, The</i>	(B) (17)
<i>Give Us This Day</i>	(A) (336)
<i>Great Lover, The</i>	(B) (10)
<i>Great Sinner, The</i>	(B) (18)
<i>Home of the Brave</i>	(B) (339)
<i>Hounded</i>	(A) (9)
<i>In The Good Old Summertime</i>	(C) (336)
<i>Innocence is Bliss</i>	(B) (19)

<i>Interrupted Journey, The</i>	(B) (341)
<i>L'Aigle à Deux Têtes</i>	(A) (348)
<i>Landfall</i>	(B) (347)
<i>Little Women</i>	(C) (338)
<i>Look for the Silver Lining</i>	(C) (19)
<i>Martin Roumagnac</i>	(A) (17)
<i>Mighty Joe Young</i>	(B) (341)
<i>Pinky</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Prince of Foxes</i>	(A) (337)
<i>Pursuit</i>	(A) (340)
<i>Reckless Moment, The</i>	(A) (17)
<i>Red, Hot and Blue</i>	(B) (350)
<i>Romantic Age, The</i>	(A) (19)
<i>Search, The</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Spider and the Fly, The</i>	(B) (18)
<i>Streets of Laredo</i>	(C) (350)
<i>Tell it to the Judge</i>	(B) (15)
<i>That Midnight Kiss</i>	(C) (11)
<i>Tokyo Joe</i>	(B) (340)
<i>Une Si Jolie Petite Plage</i>	(A) (348)
<i>Velvet Touch, The</i>	(B) (347)
<i>White Heat</i>	(A) (9)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Christopher Columbus</i>	(B) (183)
<i>Hamlet</i>	(B) (130)
<i>Joan of Arc</i>	(B) (126)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Maytime in Mayfair</i>	(B) (172)
<i>Monsieur Vincent</i>	(B) (230)
<i>Passport to Pinlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B) (70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A) (159)
<i>Visitation</i>	(B) (134)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

BOOK REVIEW

Informational Film and Television Year Book. 1940-50. (Albyn Press, 42 Frederick Street, Edinburgh, 2; 12s. 6d.)

A reference book which is perfect is, like the phoenix, a *rara avis*, but as far as fallible human co-operation can make it so, this is it. Technical film data, chronicles of the various organisations, including C.F.I. and O.C.I.C. films of the year, who's who in documentary, etc., etc., here is a book

which should be on the shelves of any organisation, college, club, society which has an interest in non-theatrical film projection or production. The faults, mainly of accuracy with regard to addresses, is a matter for the people concerned and if they would send in corrections as soon as detected with ideas for further improvements in subsequent issues, the publishers would be the first to say "thank you". In the meantime, congratulations on a useful and well produced reference volume.

THE INTERVAL CLUB

The Honorary Secretary of the Catholic Film Institute had the privilege of presiding at the Twenty-fourth Christmas Party, organised by the Interval Club on Christmas Day. This must have been surely the most enjoyable and homely gathering in all London. After a first-class dinner, the guests were treated to two beautifully produced plays, the one a Nativity Play, the other a one-act comedy by Catherine Ferraz. Apart from the fact that the plays were produced and acted by professionals, the comedy, "Table for Two," was that rare thing, a play written for professionals, and it was clear that the professional audience present enjoyed all the sallies aimed at the legitimate victims of the legitimate stage.

It does not diminish the respect with which "Table for Two" was received,

to say the *piece de resistance* was the Nativity Play, adapted from Longfellow's "Golden Legend". Long work and careful preparation must have gone to the production of this beautiful little item and the acting, setting and the carols sung by an excellent choir combined to provide an entirely satisfactory Christmas experience.

Such occasions prove, if proof were needed, that there is abundant talent of every kind available among our Catholic theatrical friends. If ever the Cinema Guild, about which we have been wishfully thinking for so long, comes into being, we could do worse than study the technique which has made the Interval Club, such a satisfactory organisation for bringing together players having their faith and their professions in common.

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COVER PERSONALITIES

LAMBERTO MAGGIORANI

and

ENZO STAIOLA

By

VITTORIO DE SICA

(who directed the film)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

By The Editor

Our reviewer has described *Bicycle Thieves* as the triumph of mind over money and as the triumph of the "unknown" over the famous.

It is fair and fitting that *Focus* should give pride of place, in this issue, to two unknown stars: Lamberto Maggiorani and Enzo Staiola (it is impossible to separate them) who shine with a brilliance which is strong, warm and fascinating. These amateurs will be remembered when many professionals are forgotten. But let Vittorio de Sica, who discovered them, tell you their story . . .

I have been asked how the idea came to me to make *Bicycle Thieves*, and if I had much difficulty in directing the two leading people in the film, who were not professional actors.

I can tell you that *Bicycle Thieves* was born of a great desire I had to tell a simple and human story. I was not impelled by any literary idea. I have simply told the story of the workman Antonio, his wife Maria and their son Bruno.

To see is very useful to an artist. Most men do not want to see, because often the pain of others troubles them. We, on the contrary, want to see. Our one aim is to see.

How many times the workman Antonio passed close to me: I met him in the street, at church, at the door of the cinema while he read the programme outside. I saw him several times with his son. In Italy men often go out with their sons. Children

converse and argue with their father, become confidants, and very often become no longer children, but "little men".

This, I think, is universal, and that is why the image of these two beings, which I always saw united, made me decide to choose the story of Antonio and Bruno.

Lamberto Maggiorani, a simple workman of Breda, was very kind to me. He left his own work for two months to lend his face to me. I never had any difficulty with him. It is true that for the first few days he had to overcome a slight fear, which comes to everyone who is unused to filming. But afterwards he lived with great truth and naturalness the part of Antonio, from whom was stolen the tool he needed for living—his bicycle. It was not hard for me to direct Maggiorani.

Enzo Staiola is the most lovable child in the world. He is good, sensitive, intelligent. I don't think it is possible to create a character like that of Bruno without having the qualities which Enzo possesses.

He is a poor child, son of refugees, whom I met by accident. His open, communicative face appealed to me at once. His expressions are half comic. His eyes have a soft and melancholy look. With his large nose and chubby cheeks he has the unmistakable look of a child who has known suffering.

I do not think I have to explain why I had no difficulty whatever in directing this child, who my good fortune enabled me to meet by chance in the street.

(By courtesy of the Management of Curzon Cinema.)

THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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Made by Andrew Buchanan. A plea by a well-known American scientist for the positive use of atomic energy. Sound. Monochrome. 2 reels. 20 mins. Hiring fee: £1 1s. 0d.

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English sub-titles. 16mm. (Also available in 35mm.) Bookings arranged for MONSIEUR VINCENT, £7 10s. 0d. first day.—TO LIVE IN PEACE, £5 5s. 0d. first day.—FARREBIQUE, £5 5s. 0d. first day.—FOUR STEPS IN THE CLOUDS, £5 5s. 0d. first day.

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

MARCH 1950

No. 3

"You may trifle with human things, but hands off Sacred Mysteries"

When I asked a good humoured, tolerant, Italian priest, what he thought of Rossellini's film: *The Miracle*, he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Scerza coi Fanti
La scia i Santi."

(You may trifle with human things
But hands off sacred mysteries.)

This Italian proverb is a just comment on the much discussed *Miracle* and puts it in its proper place.

In *Paisa*, Rossellini had his little joke about the Franciscan Friars, whom he portrayed as an order of naïve men, so removed from the realities of life that one of the characters in the film says: "How can these men judge us when they are cut off from the world?" The implication was obvious. There is no reason why Rossellini should not have used the Friars for a story (all human things are material for an artist) and no harm was done; in Franciscan circles the joke was on Rossellini. But, there is every reason, of decency and delicacy, why Rossellini should keep his hands off the Sacred Mysteries of the Incarnation and the Miracle of the Virgin Birth.

It will be argued, of course, that there is no direct attack on these dogmas of revealed truth. A direct attack would be less harmful. The

attack is by implication and juxtaposition which is so cunningly contrived as to deceive even the elect. Of what avail is beautiful art if the heart of the thing is ugly? There springs to one's mind Shakespeare's words: "A goodly apple, rotten at the core".

This is not a review of the film. It is just a plain statement that the ideas inherent in this film are repulsive and irresponsible. Unwholesome food served in golden vessels does not become any the less unwholesome. Art does not cover a multitude of sins. The fact that many non-Catholics have deplored *The Miracle* is proof that Catholics are not being unduly sensitive in putting it on the black list. It is nonsense to say that art has no barriers. And the film artist is not free to say and do what he likes.

"We artists in this new medium," says Edward Carrick, "have in charge a trust of enormous value. Upon our studies, our devotion and enthusiasm must depend the thoughts and emotions of coming generations, for the film has become the most popular of the arts, and through it millions derive their entire inspiration and perception of emotional values. Never before in history has the artist been in a position to command such a gigantic audience . . . never before was he so responsible to civilisation."

EDITOR.

SYLLOGISMS ON THE CINEMA

An unusual broadcast, but one of great interest to readers of *FOCUS*, was provided by the B.B.C. in their Third Programme during January. The Dominican Fathers staged a Medieval Disputation in which our Chairman, Very Rev. Father Hilary Carpenter, O.P., defended the thesis: "The Cinema is the highest Form of Art."

INTRODUCTION

The proceedings, which took place before an audience in the Old Hall, Lincoln's Inn, were opened by Cyril Cusack, who observed that: "Such a subject might well seem very far removed from the thinkers of the Middle Ages and their method of enquiry might well appear ill-chosen to examine its claims". Yet he found, after all, a certain fittingness both in the method and in the place of this Disputation, for "The Cinema," he said, "is now on trial as to its claims to be an art, and even the highest form of art; and the canons of art, according to which it must be judged, are laws as firm and as ancient as the laws of human behaviour . . . In accepting the honour of introducing this Disputation," he went on, "I see myself invited to hold a watching brief for the Defendant, the Cinema, with which I am now so closely associated. Whether the defendant's claim, as put forward by Father Hilary Carpenter, can be upheld, I do not know . . . In any event I am sure of one thing, namely that the case will be investigated expertly and impartially on both sides."

The Moderator of the Disputation, Father Kenneth Wykeham-George, O.P., explained briefly the import and process of this kind of Disputation, making a very important point, namely that "a Disputation is not the same as a debate", for in a Disputation "both

parties combine to establish by analysis some objective truth . . . Its purpose is to add, if possible, to the permanent equipment of the mind, that is to say, not to add to the stock of opinions but to the building up of truth in each individual mind."

DEFENCE

Father Carpenter, in his initial defence of the thesis, explained what he meant by "the Cinema" and by "art". By the former he meant the whole production of a film, from preliminary script to actual projection. In his exposition of the meaning of art, he showed that beauty, which is the essential element of art, is the outward expression of *integrity*, that is of truth and goodness, which must exist in the artist and is a reflection of the beauty, that is the truth and goodness, of the Creator Himself. "To make a work of art," he said, "is to catch the reflection of the beauty of God in the works of His hands, and to enshrine it." "There is," he observed, "a high kind of utility in art. Art is not for art's sake; for beauty is significant and therefore art in its highest form is most significant. By this I mean that true art proclaims truth and goodness in a vivid and vital way, and the artist thus communicates truth and goodness to his fellows through their minds and emotions combined. The more effective this communication, the higher the form of art." But "the true and indeed the only medium of communication between rational minds is the imagination . . . and light and sound are the most plastic and yet most significant material of all . . . to which sense and mind react most immediately with emotion and thought." This medium of light and sound is the medium of the Cinema, needing only the artistry of the Director to control it and thus to produce the finest works of art.

ATTACK AND COUNTER

The official Objector, **Fr. John Baptist Reeves, O.P.**, began his attack with a simple syllogism hinging on the fact that photography is not the highest form of art. This was pursued to its logical conclusion, the Defender being able to show eventually that the Cinema is photography with a purpose, namely to entertain in the fullest sense of the word, that is to say with an appeal to both senses and mind.

The Objector then urged that no art that is controlled by economic consideration is the highest form of art. The Defender distinguished between the absolute control of economic considerations and the further control of economics themselves by the public conscience that should maintain in any civilised community. In reply to a further objection, the Defender pointed out that the Cinema is more than mere showmanship provided that the Director is a true artist. He emphasised the important point that it is the genius of the Director that makes the film. Father Reeves then maintained that all the nobler arts are religious in origin, unlike the Cinema. The Defender replied that though the Cinema is not an expression of religious worship, as are some of the arts, nevertheless it is a fitting medium of religious truth and beauty.

The Moderator now took up the attack in which he endeavoured to show that the Cinema is not a medium of truth or of goodness, because its whole aim is to produce illusion and it is used moreover to portray evil passions. The Defender met this attack first by showing that the illusion is in the method and not necessarily in the idea portrayed and then by pointing out that the portrayal of evil passions is not evil in itself, provided that its purpose is to emphasise their evil and not to incite them in others. He drew attention to the world of difference between *Duel in the Sun* and *Cielo sulla Palude*.

THE AUDIENCE ATTACKS

The attack was then continued by our Honorary Secretary, **Father Burke**, who urged that the highest form of art is productive of the finest works of art, which is not true of the Cinema. The Defender distinguished the implication

of the word "productive", agreeing that the highest form of art is capable of producing the finest works of art, and therefore urging that, though the Cinema is not actually productive of the finest works of art, it is nevertheless capable of producing them.

Dr. Denis Dooley, of Charing Cross Hospital, then entered the lists with the objection that the highest form of art requires that the Director of that art should be supreme, whereas in the Cinema the Art Director is not supreme, which gave the Defender an opportunity of rejecting the false meaning of "art" in modern jargon and of pointing out that, by an anomaly, in the Cinema the Art Director is not the Director of the art of the Cinema.

Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart followed with a powerful objection based upon the need of integrity in any true art form, an integrity which is clearly lacking in the complicated medium of the Cinema. The Defender readily admitted the need of integrity, but pointed out that this integrity must be measured, in a film, by the artistic integrity of the Director. If the latter is present, then there will be integrity in the film he creates.

Mr. Richard O'Sullivan, K.C., declared, with obvious conviction, that the Cinema panders to the lowest human tastes for the sake of gain, and therefore could not be the highest form of art. But the Defender riposted with the distinction that, though what the Objector said might be true of many or even of all films, it still did not follow that films must be characterised by this baseness. He gave the example of two films, amongst many, where this was clearly not the case, namely *Monsieur Vincent* and *The Search*.

Finally Father Reeves was invited by the Moderator to make a final objection. He did so by urging that the imagination is no true medium for art, seeing that art is concerned to convey truth and objective goodness. But the Defender was able to turn the tables by showing that imagination is essential for the transference of truth and goodness from one human mind to another, wherefore an art that used imagination to the full is the highest form of art.

THE MODERATOR SUMS UP

In his summing up the Moderator judged that the Defender had been essentially unshaken in the maintaining of his thesis, but drew attention to the fact that he had been compelled to word that thesis more precisely, first by admitting that the Cinema is not actually productive of the highest works of art and secondly by admitting that it is only potentially and not as yet in fact the highest form of art.

*

This present precis of the Disputation inevitably misses the wealth of thought and the dispassionate but compelling logic of the procedure. Nevertheless it gives an outline of the

ground covered and gives some indication of the high principles involved in a thoughtful consideration of the value of the Cinema. We feel that the Catholic Film Institute has received indirectly a magnificent apologia through the able defence of the Cinema by its Chairman.

*

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT. — The many people who "listened-in" to the above Disputation will be pleased to know that it received an excellent Press. By courtesy of the Literary Editor of the "Observer", I am able to reprint W. E. Williams' comments.

Modes of Contention

By W. E. WILLIAMS

The Third Programme is often teased for its modish interest in antique forms of art, yet in its rummaging among the Middle Ages it has discovered a pattern of expression that might have been created for wireless. The "Medieval Disputation" which it mounted the other night is a mode of contention as different from the average discussion as Bach is from bebop. The rules of this lucid, dispassionate exercise call for two principal contestants, one to erect and another to dismantle a series of well-built propositions—this time on the piquant thesis that "The Cinema is the Highest Form of Art".

The combination of ancient

method and modern topic did not sound, as one had feared it might, like an attempt to play Stravinsky on a clavichord. It was as apt and valid as any fourteenth-century scrutiny of matters of fundamental doctrine. The Dominicans, evidently, are still trained in this discipline of logical deliberation, and Father Hilary Carpenter (doing most of the work) treated us to a consummate exhibition of clear thinking, cool, unemotional, precise. The formula, no doubt, could easily become irksome, but it was a refreshing change from those slap-dash, rattle-taggle arguments that proliferate on the wireless.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 2—SYLLABUS SUGGESTIONS

To help those intending to form film study groups, I am going to suggest a syllabus to cover fortnightly meetings for six months, constituting the first half of a progressive Course. The subjects are merely to guide organisers, and should not be regarded as unalterable, for both the knowledge of individual members, and conditions vary to such a degree in different areas that no plan can be completely acceptable to all. Also I want to make it clear that this first half of the Course does not offer lessons in actual film-making. They will follow in the second half. The first duty of the film student is to learn everything possible about the medium and deal with first things first.

As readers know, the ultimate aim of this Course is to discover and develop individual talent which, eventually, is hoped, can be gathered together to create a religious film unit or units, capable of producing films of the highest quality. However, unlike many groups and clubs formed solely to make miscellaneous films; the object here is to regard film as a means to an end, the end being the projection of the Christian message on the screen. *That* is the ultimate goal; but running parallel to it is the equally important task of developing the critical faculty in an ever-increasing number of people, to enable them to fully appreciate fine qualities in films, and to be very discerning about cinema-going. Therefore, whether the student is likely to become skilled in one or other branch of production, or remain content to approach film-going in an intelligent way, the Course should prove invaluable.

It is surprising how many people, attracted by the surface-value of films, begin at the end, and try to rush into production, believing that the making of films is the only activity in

the industry. Many possess technical knowledge, yet know nothing of the great industrial machine without which no film could reach the public. Others know little about vital market problems, production costs, the important part which projection plays, or even rudimentary facts about negatives, positives, and the various sizes of film stock. And yet all these matters are inter-related to actual production, and it is the duty of the student, be he writer, technician or organiser, to learn all he can about them. Here, then, is a suggested syllabus:

1. The Structure of the film industry. Production. Distribution. Exhibition. The Quota Act. Audience statistics.
2. Classification. Feature films. Short films. Theatrical films. Non-Theatrical films. Standard and sub-standard sizes.
3. The shape of Commercial Programmes. Effect of two feature films on an audience. Absence of short films in cinemas. Influence of films on the public.
4. The News Reel. Its commercial value. Its limitations. Its influence. Indirect propaganda. Can it be improved within the existing framework?
5. Fictional versus Factual films. The importance of natural backgrounds. Comparison with studio settings. What is the true function of film? Is that function fulfilled?
6. The film in education. What the teacher needs to know. What the producer needs to know. Commercial problems. Scope and future of classroom films.
7. Films for children. Distribution problems. Production problems. subject-matter. Is it wise to develop cinema-going in the very young? Effect of adult films on child minds.

8. The religious film. Distribution problems. The realistic approach. The theatrical approach. Costs. The need for inspiration.
9. Subject-matter. Adaptations versus original screen material. Dependence of narration on dialogue. Pictorial narration. Does dialogue retard development of the universal film? Methods of the French school. Methods of the Italian school.
10. Film Music. As a background. As an integral part of a film. Comparison of current use of music with specially composed orchestral accompaniments to early silent films. Film Music Copyright.
11. Introducing the film-makers. The specialists whose work, collectively, results in a film. Scenarist. Producer. Director. Art Director. Cameramen. Recorder. Editor. Laboratory workers.
12. Summarising discussion on the first eleven lessons, and preparation for the second half of the Course.

Observations on the first lesson—discussion:

The three great branches of the industry, production, distribution, and exhibition, are so closely inter-related that a hold-up of any kind in one sends repercussions throughout the others.

Why is this so? Discover and discuss the main production centres in the world.

Analyse Britain's Quota Act and judge whether it fulfils its purpose, which is to safeguard British production, and guarantee it a home market.

Does the public get the programmes it likes?

Can the cinema-goer influence exhibitor, distributor and producer?

Is it healthy for a large chain of cinemas to be owned by one distributing and producing concern?

How many members in your group already know the extent to which poor projection can ruin the presentation of a film?

Consider the implications of the following statistics:

Three hundred million people throughout the world go to cinemas weekly.

There are about 80,000 cinemas in the world. Approximately 4,800 of them are in Britain.

About one person in three goes to the cinema at least once a week.

Some, especially young people, go several times.

One in every four people do not go at all.

People between the ages of sixteen and twenty are the most frequent cinema-goers.

People over sixty go least of all.

The influence of film is greater than any other medium—greater than broadcasting. Why?

Reading list: "Sociology of Film", by J. P. Mayer (Faber). "The Film Till Now", by Paul Rotha (Vision Press).

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS' FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Kindly send donation to:

Rev. J. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

IL MIRACULO

Starring: Anna Magnani. **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd. **Director:** Roberto Rossellini. **Certificate:** *Refused by British Board of Film Censors. Category: Strictly A.* **Running time:** 40 minutes.

This film has been the centre of much controversy in Italy where it has been both praised and condemned. It is likely to arouse similar contention in this country. No one as far as I know has denied that it is extremely well made and acted. That does not mean that it is well that it should have been made, still less that it should be offered to indiscriminate exhibition. The British Board of Film Censors are to be commended for their refusal to give it a licence.

Those who disagree with this attitude must try to appreciate the fact that a Christian country, even when it does not subscribe to the completeness of the Catholic interpretation of the mystery of the Incarnation, necessarily regards the birth of Christ as something particularly sacred. Any oblique allusion to it, therefore, as in this film, cannot but cause misgiving, however skilfully or reverently the allusion is made. It has been said that other "religious" films, of the Hollywood variety are more objectionable on account of their sentimentality and lack of taste; that may be so; it still remains that *Il Miraculo* touches the Christian faith at a very sensitive point. An audience of believers may well appreciate the artistic merits of the film: they cannot but feel embarrassment at the implications of a story in which a simple-minded Italian shepherdess imagines that the child she is to bear has St. Joseph for its father. There is a very wide field of fruitful subjects for the expression of the great

art of Anna Magnani; it is not necessary for her to submit the key doctrine of Christianity to the speculation of the curious in this way. Rossellini doubtless had the best motives in making this film but there are some things which are just not done.

J. A. V. B.

TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH

Starring: Gregory Peck, with Hugh Marlowe, Gary Merrill, Millard Mitchell and Dean Jagger. **Director:** Henry King. **Producer:** Darryl F. Zanuck. 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 133 minutes.

The Cinema is said to base its claim to be a true art-form on its power to reflect the transcendentals, truth and beauty. This rather puts the war-film on the spot since there is little of beauty in war and so the director has to be even more than usually meticulous about his devotion to truth. Otherwise the result is that the ordinary people who form the personnel of a non-professional fighting force are either glorified to the heights of unreality or else debased to the depths of bestiality.

This film, telling the story of an American Bomber Group in England in the year 1942, impresses one because of its real, almost documentary, approach. We are shown ordinary men beginning to crack up under the strain of heavy loss of life and the apparent futility of the task they have undertaken. A new Commander (Gregory Peck) is given the distasteful job of imposing an iron discipline and restoring morale. This he does, chiefly by personal example, and the Group becomes one of the best on operations.

Gregory Peck gives an extremely good performance as the Group

Commander and the supporting players are all very competent, especially Dean Jagger as the middle-aged adjutant. The strength of the film lies in its avoidance of all false histrionics and its sensitive picture of ordinary men carrying out a duty which is repulsive to them. There are some very exciting and authentic looking air battles. Apart from a slowness of tempo at the beginning it is a well-constructed and well-directed film.

Mc.

THE RUGGED O'RIORDANS

Starring: John O'Malley, Thelma Scott. **Producer and Director:** Charles Chauvel. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

This is not a case of so and so in *The Rugged O' Riordans*, but of *The Rugged O' Riordans* with John O'Malley and Thelma Scott, while the most colourful players, Michael Pate and Wendy Gibb are not mentioned in the credits. This is as it should be because this impressive film from Australia is in the nature of a documentary, with commentator and all, sweetened with a love interest. Basically it is the story of any group of pioneers in the wild, beautiful, heart-breaking and difficult terrain of the Australian bush. The story gives a vivid picture of the difficulties of the early free settlers, of the colossal labours of such men and of the faith and fortitude of their women.

It was a true instinct which excluded the starring of actors, for the outstanding feature is the exuberant and all too resilient force of nature: the wild country, the stampeding untamed horses, the frightened cattle, the enveloping vegetation and drought and tempest as well. The theme is the reaction of brave and resolute men and women, their struggles and their triumph.

There is one criticism I would make of the *O' Riordans* which I hope it is not petty to make. You see, there were Irish and Catholic. They have a Catholic-sized family, they have a tradition of a family united in affection, interests and work. They have the decent standards which many good men, but particularly Catholics, should

have and maintain; but apart from childhood's night prayers, there is no sign of priest or Mass or Sacraments. These would not be everyday facilities under pioneering conditions, but to have an authentic impression of so high minded an Irish Catholic family it would surely be a good thing, almost a necessary thing, to indicate whence they derived their moral strength. It is not a question of making a Catholic film out of this, but of making a more authentic film.

X.

NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTER

Starring: Esther Williams, Red Skelton, Ricardo Montalban and Betty Garrett. A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Production. **Director:** Edward Buzzell. **Producer:** Jack Cummings. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** None. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

Apart from some innocent merriment between Red Skelton and Miss Garrett, and for some lavish technicolor, there is nothing whatever to recommend this film, and a great deal to condemn it. It is all about "a guy, a girl and a bathing suit"—a slender theme which is nothing more than an excuse for displaying bathing beauties in very slender bathing suits. There are occasional dives and displays, but the "beauts" and the suits seem to be the thing, with a particularly sensuous dance by way of a change.

To feel happy or even comfortable in such an atmosphere would indicate that we are well on the way to accepting some of the worst standards of a pagan world. Not that there is anything positively indecent. The Board of Censors give it a "U" certificate. But its underlying values are insidious, and it is the worst type of stuff for the adolescent who, in such a glamorous atmosphere, may well be allured into equating love with lust, and into thinking the only pre-requisite for marriage is an over-dose of sex appeal. Here, maybe, "U" stands for "undress" or "universally unsuitable". Anyway it's not for you.

G.

Woman in Hiding

Starring: Ida Lupino, Howard Duff and Stephen McNally, with Peggy Dow, John Litel and Taylor Holmes. A Universal-International Picture. **Director:** Michael Gordon. *Certificate: A. Category: B. Running time: 92 minutes.*

If you like a picture which makes your flesh creep, your hair stand on end, your teeth chatter, freezes the marrow in your bones, chills your spine, catches your breath, makes your eyes start out of their sockets, brings a cold perspiration to your brow and generally leaves you feeling limp, *Woman in Hiding* is the film for you. To expect it to exhibit qualities of coherence and conviction after it has done all that for you, is, perhaps, asking too much. In addition, Ida Lupino, who plays with her customary craftsmanship, is thrown in a car over a bridge into a lake from which she emerges dry, but slightly dusty; gallant efforts are also made to throw her down a fire escape, off a cat walk and from a moving train, not to mention the attempt to have her confined in a lunatic asylum.



The lady's not for leaping
Ida Lupino—Stephen McNally

As the police are dragging the lake for her body her ghostly voice announces with unaccustomed candour: "No one would believe it!" After that it seems rather caddish to complain about entertainment tax.

The general idea is that Selden Clark wants to gain possession of the Clarks-ville mill. To attain his end he does not stop at murdering his boss, marrying his victim's daughter and planning her removal also. To analyse such a story too closely is not playing the game, so I shall, as George Robey would put it, desist.

Howard Duff is charming as the boy friend who has to be on hand to take the heroine towards the sunset when her nasty husband gets his deserts. Ida Lupino almost convinces one that the film is important. Together with the slick editing and some smart camera work her performance lifts the film out of the rut of ordinary thrillers. As the nasty husband, Stephen McNally is in appearance and style a curious mixture of James Mason and Victor Mature. He is, shall we say, more Masonic than Mature.

V.

COPPER CANYON

Starring: Ray Milland, Hedy Lamarr, Macdonald Carey, Mona Freeman, Harry Carey, Jr. Presented by Paramount in Technicolor. **Producer:** Mel Epstein. **Director:** John Farrow. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 88 minutes.*

This is a competent Western film in technicolor. Little more than that need be said. As usual the mental age of the audience is assumed to be about 15; perhaps the film people are right, but I feel that an occasional scrap thrown to the plus 15's could add distinction to this type of production. Ray Milland does well in the lead in this story, concerned with an unscrupulous gang who are victimising a mining town in the far west.

T.



David (Trevor Howard) reads: "Not by ignoring evil does one overcome it, but by going out to meet it"

GOLDEN SALAMANDER

Starring: Trevor Howard and Anouk, with Herbert Lom and Jacques Sernas. **Producer:** Ronald Neame. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Director:** Ronald Neame. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

It is a tribute to Herbert Lom to say that it gave me, who am the most pacific of beings and who considers that sadism is quite the worst aspect of most films from the moral point of view, the utmost satisfaction when Trevor Howard gave him what those who are not Nazis used to call Commando treatment. It was violent and very unpleasant and left Lom disabled at the foot of the stairs. It is the one point in the film which makes me hesitate at giving it a "C" rating. Yet I should have been intensely disappointed if we had not witnessed this entirely retributive thrashing. It is a compliment to Ronald Neame, Director, and Jack Harris, Editor, that this most exciting of films, dealing with

the adventures of an archæologist who runs into contact with a gang of gun-runners in Algiers, in which violence is continually suggested, which has the most exciting escape and manhunt sequences seen since *Manhunt*, manages to last for 80 of its 87 minutes without letting the audience see anything more violent than a haggling scene in an open-air market.

It is this complete economy and balance in cutting that is the chief merit on the technical side of a film which abounds with merits both technical and artistic. Not a foot is wasted and there is not a foot too much. We would willingly see more of so many episodes and characters and that is a good thing. The tantalising street scenes of an Arab wedding: groom being escorted with dancing attendants bearing bath towels, soap and something in a bottle; because "a bridegroom needs a bath for purity". The rascally Aribi, a dragoman with a fund of epigrams and proverbs which are, he informs us, "the distilled essence of my own thoughts"; the

corrupt but benevolent policeman, Douvet; the most naturalistic market scenes, full of atmosphere captured by a master cameraman; the priest outside his church after Mass on Sunday; the boar-hunt and the people setting off in the charabancs, a big fish struggling on the deck of a small boat: there are a score or more of these most enchanting vignettes and flashes.

The cast is surely the most apt since the Carol Reed films: each player fits his part like a glove; Miles Malleon as the policeman; Wilfred Hyde-White—always superb—in a juicy part as Agno, an amiable drunk; Peter Copley, delightfully sycophantic as the dragoman.

But it is the chief players who deserve the chief praise in this film. Trevor Howard has developed consistently as a film artist since his small part as the Squadron Leader in *Way to the Stars*. Here he is just perfect as the archaeologist who changes from the diffident scholar to a man of action and comes through the fire of adversity like the golden salamander of legend. Anouk, the enchanting

young French girl who manages in in some mysterious way to look bewitching in a dirty raincoat and drab beret with dank hair as I saw her at Pinewood one day. She has a personality that needs no grooming; may she be spared the ordeal which doubtless some moronic type will insist on subjecting her to. Herbert Lom, another skilled artist; as the most brutal of the gun-runners he manages to make one loathe his complete command of every situation so that some primitive instinct demands the satisfaction of seeing him in pain before the close of the film. Walter Rilla, suave and objectionably correct as the megalomaniac behind the scenes; another skilful player, seldom so well suited to a rôle as here. All of which adds up to a big compliment to a director who has evidently control of his imagination and his players, so that he is able to repeat for us the great experience of the war-days when practically every British film was a near masterpiece. What a relief not to apologise for a native film!

V.



Rankl (Herbert Lom): "You didn't happen to see it?"

David (Trevor Howard): "No."

LE ROI

Starring: Maurice Chevalier, with Annie Ducaux, Sophie Desmarests, and Alfred Adam. **Distributors:** Films de France. **Director:** Marc Gilbert Sauvajon. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

Why is it that the word "naughty" when applied to anything French conjures up fleeting visions of forbidden fruits? Somehow, "naughty English" does not have the same effect! I fear it is largely a matter of Victorian Protestant prejudices about the Catholic Continent. Not that I wish it to be thought that Catholic continentals are permitted any priorities with respect to the Decalogue. It is, perhaps, a matter of what you believe. Chesterton says something about those having the Faith also having the fun. You have to believe in the Commandments before you can be guilty of breaking them. The curious thing is that those who appear to have least regard for the teachings of the Church are most shocked when they are broken.

What a serious introduction to a very frothy French meringue! Yes, it *is* naughty, but it's nice and will do most grown-ups no harm if they like Maurice Chevalier and stories about Ruritanian monarchs who dally with the wives and lady friends of the politicians, who are so busy being ambitious that they have no time to look after their wives or their countries.

A bishop in the film takes advantage of his opportunity to tell the politician that if he has designs on the kingdom of Heaven, it is necessary to begin his campaign of assault at once!

Maurice is a little too elderly for this kind of thing, but his smile is still captivating though his waist line is expanding and his voice diminishing. *Le Roi* is a kind of flashback to the days before equality of misery spread to the French screen. Nobody could be miserable with the enchanting Sophie Desmarests and the beautiful Annie Ducaux to enliven them.

V.

A KISS FOR CORLISS

Starring: Shirley Temple, David Niven, Tom Tully, Virginia Welles. **Director:** Richard Wallace. **Producer:** Colin Miller. Released through United Artists. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

If you have considerable regard for the love affairs of teenagers you may find this film enjoyable.

Shirley Temple, who plays the part of a girl of seventeen, is sentimentally attached to a youth of about the same age with a whiney sort of voice. Because he proves a trifle fickle, she pretends to have had a romantic meeting with a notorious but likeable scamp, David Niven. For some unexplained reason this scamp decides to behave as if this intrigue had really occurred and consequently many semi-amusing domestic situations arise.

T.

MISS PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Starring: Yolande Donlan and Michael Rennie. **Director:** Val Guest. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

Why were not the Press invited to see this film? It is one of the neatest (and cheapest) little comedies we have seen for some time. Is it that it did not cost enough money to rank as a West End offering? But *Bicycle Thieves* cost a fraction of the average Hollywood or Pine . . . liam production and has been acclaimed by both critics and public. So it is evident that a film that costs but little money need not be cheap, nor will the critics normally fail to recognise a good thing when they see it.

A simple idea is the basic element of most good films. Here we are introduced to an American girl who comes to a factory in Berkshire on an exchange scheme for a month. All the obvious gags about monacles, corn-on-the-cob, English money, ration books, cold hot-water and candle-light are packed into the film, but they are not out of place. Eventually the girl enables

the village in which she lives to side-track a satellite-town plan by discovering some of the operative clauses in Magna Carta, a document about which most of the English characters are blissfully ignorant. Says a gum chewing girl in the factory: "Magna Carta? Tell me who's in it and I'll tell you if it's any good!"

Yolande Donlan is an enchantingly "dumb" blonde with some of the most comical facial expressions I have seen for a long time. She is the centre of an efficient supporting cast, including Jon Pertwee and Reginald Beckwith. Michael Rennie is a little too "superior" as the son of the village grocer, but is more successful in this than in many of his other more expensive vehicles.

If you want an amusing evening go to see *Miss Pilgrim's Progress*.

V.

NOT WANTED

Starring: Sally Forrest, Keefe Braselle, Leo Penn. **Distributors:** International Film Renters. **Director:** Elmer Clifton. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 94 minutes.

This film, which did not get a West End booking (apart from Studio One, which ranks it as a Specialist) is Ida Lupino's first effort at production. It is concerned with a young unmarried mother, a theme which lays it open to much muddled sentimentality posing as progressive thinking and yet withal is not without interest for Catholics. Though there is some special pleading for sympathy for the sin as well as for the sinner, there is also enough counter-balancing morality to save it from condemnation.

It is mainly notable for the excellent performances of its three principal players. Sally Forrest as the young mother has a great range of emotional power; Keefe Braselle, as a young motor mechanic who loves the girl, conveys the innocent devotion of the idealist most movingly, and Leo Penn transmits a quite evil impression through his rôle as the thwarted but essentially depraved pianist. With such a group of unknowns as this, there can be nothing wrong with American films from the point of view of potential actors.

The sets are convincing and the use of exterior location lends it a documentary flavour which, perhaps, contributes not a little to its appeal. A picture for the discriminating audience.

V.

FRANCIS

Starring: Donald O'Connor, with Patricia Medina, Zasu Pitts, Ray Collins, John McIntire. **Producer:** Robert Arthur. **Director:** Arthur Lubin. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

For the benefit of readers who always jump to pious conclusions, I must make it clear at the outset that this is not the life of a saint. Francis is one of our dumb friends who is not so dumb, a mule who talks, except when the obstinacy of his kind makes him inconveniently silent.

The action takes place in Burma during the war. But since the war has been over for some years the picture has to be given a more up-to-date frame. (If I may be allowed a paradox, even the subtleties of the film are rather obvious.) But I think none the worse of the Hollywood army because on this occasion it has taken time off from winning the war to laugh at itself. I laughed too each time Donald O'Connor, after claiming that a mule had talked to him, was next discovered enduring occupational therapy under the care of Zasu Pitts (rather a favourite of mine since the days of silent films). But if anyone is thinking of casting Patricia Medina in an oh-la-la part again . . . "Mais, non". Thank you, Miss Medina. You have taken the words out of my mouth.

There is half a line now and again which might give some offence to those on the look out for such things, but on the whole the film is innocent enough.

In the past an occasional wisecrack from a camel or a hen has been funny enough, because the idea was not overdone. But this joke lasts for an hour and a half. *Therefore* . . . (Editor: Thank you, but this is not the Third Programme.)

Q.



George Dixon (Jack Warner) and Andy Mitchell go on duty



Andy Mitchell talks to the young crook, Tom, and his girl, Dianna (Peggy Evans)



C. Mitchell (Jimmy Hanley) brings the revolver with which P.C. Dixon was shot



Tom (Dirk Bogarde) carries out his armed hold-up at the cinema

THE BLUE LAMP

Starring: Jack Warner, Jimmy Hanley, Dirk Bogarde, Robert Fleming, with Bernard Lee, Peggy Evans and Gladys Henson.
Producer: Michael Balcon.
Director: Basil Dearden. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 85 minutes approx.

This film has had a great deal of publicity from the Press and in other ways. It was known that Scotland Yard had co-operated in its making. It was, therefore, with a certain amount of foreboding that I went to see it, for publicity has a knack of killing all but the very best films. I need not have worried; *The Blue Lamp* is a very good film and will certainly prove one of the most popular of the year.

The authorities at Scotland Yard were most interested and gave every assistance to ensure accuracy. I am told that there is only one oversight: constables do not hang up their armlets with their helmets when they report back to the station! Still, to the audience, that is a very small point. The important thing is that we are presented with a sympathetic, authentic and dramatic semi-documentary of the everyday life of the London policeman. The monotony, the efficiency, the discipline, the trustworthiness involved in being a policeman is faithfully recorded. Withal, the heroism of the unarmed guardian of the law fighting the modern young thug, outcropping of the war years, is shown in such a manner as to make us doubly proud of the men who go round trying our door handles at night.

The script, by T. E. B. Clarke is a model of economy and craftsmanship, the dialogue just right, the humorous

interjections just the right flavour. The director, Basil Dearden, has resisted any temptation to exploit the situations and characters (I feared for a moment or two that the gunman's "moll" would be made to fall for the handsome young cop), they are allowed to tell their stories in their own way at their own speed. From a deliberately steady pace the film works up to one of the most exciting car-chase climaxes seen on the English screen. The capture of the murderer in the White City during a race meeting is vividly and convincingly real and makes me certain in my judgment that, in spite of the contrary opinion of several eminent critics, *The Blue Lamp* is every bit as sound and exciting as *The Naked City*. One is English, the other is American, both are excellent and both tell the story of the police in a great city in a manner which is truly characteristic.

The Blue Lamp tells of the man on the beat, kindly, tolerant, steady-going, directing children across the street, finding lost dogs for garrulous old ladies but also walking unerringly towards an armed young thug in a cinema hold-up. Panicking, the thug kills the policeman and we then see the intricate machinery of Scotland Yard turning to bring the murderer to his account.

The cast is an exceptionally fine one. Not a weak link in the team. It is difficult to draw attention to any without seeming unfairness to all. Jack Warner as the murdered P.C. scores heavily. Dirk Bogarde in his first "heavy" rôle shows that he can really act and produces a lifelike study of the modern wide guy who is not, after all, so smart. Bernard Lee and Robert Fleming as a Divisional Detective Inspector and Sergeant respectively are so convincing, it is hard to realise they are acting. Peggy Evans makes a great deal of noise as a stupid girl who attaches herself to the young crook; Gladys Henson as the wife of Jack Warner, Dora Bryan in a perfect vignette of outraged feminine fatuity, Meredith Edwards—but there is not space to do credit to all the talent in this film. Go and pay them the compliment of seeing the film again: it is worth it. Incidentally, it ought to make us a little more tolerant and appreciative of the men who take our names for parking in the wrong places!

V.

BOYS IN BROWN

Starring: Jack Warner, Richard Attenborough, Dirk Bogarde, Jimmy Hanley, Barbara Murray, Andrew Crawford, Thora Hird, Michael Medwin and Patrick Holt. **Director:** Montgomery Tully. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

Another film which the Press was not asked to see. Why? It is well worth their attention and since it deals with a Borstal, a problem institution housing problem boys, it would have made an interesting comparison with *The Blue Lamp*, shown during the same week and with almost the same cast.

Borstal claims to have about 50 per cent successes from among boys drawn from all the worst elements in the country. "How would Harrow, Eton and the rest fare," says Jack Warner, as the Governor of the Institution, "if they had to draw from the same sources?" This film, taken from Reginald Beckwith's play, is a sympathetic attempt to show the effects of a reform school upon various types of delinquents; of the efforts made by the authorities to correct criminal tendencies; of the reactions of the boys to the methods adopted.

The cast is remarkably good. Jack Warner, after his success as P.C. Dixon in *The Blue Lamp*, scores heavily in one of the most serious rôles he has hitherto played. Dirk Bogarde, too, as a most unpleasantly neurotic type of lad, adds very considerably to the reputation which his part as the crook in *The Blue Lamp* will have earned him. Of the others, it is invidious, perhaps, to say which are the best. They are all good. Barbara Murray, however, deserves a hand for her feelingly sketched little "girl friend". Michael Medwin, as usual, is perfect as a spiv—"but I've got me pride!"

The script is compact and the direction neat: on the whole an economically made film—and I do not mean cheap.

V.

MADELEINE

Starring: Ann Todd, Norman Wooland, Ivan Desny. **Producer:** Stanley Haynes. **Director:** David Lean. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 114 minutes.

It all happened in 1857 and, under Mr. Lean's scrupulous direction, comes to life again in 1950.

Madeleine Smith was a "nice" girl with prosperous parents, a pretentious house in Glasgow, willing servants and an extraordinarily chivalrous suitor approved of by her parents and well liked by her. Cowed by her father, she keeps the suitor stringing along while at the same time she leads a surreptitious life of guilt, with a socially inferior Frenchman, utterly outside her family circle, regularly visiting her at night below stairs. This is possible with the compliance of one of the maids of the house. The suitor, plus her family and then the French lover, become more and more pressing for the decisive step of marriage. Deceit has its tensions and the Frenchman has her love letters to blackmail her with if he so desires.

When the girl is like a hunted animal at bay, the lover dies of arsenical poisoning and we, as privileged onlookers are aware of a big motive for murder and also of opportunity, for Madeleine has had arsenic handy for cosmetic purposes and likes to give her lover cups of cocoa. But though the awkward lover dies, the awkward letters remain. They do indeed remain for an official of the French consulate to hand over to the police, who come to disturb the orderly, secure lives of the Smiths of Blytiswood Square by arresting Madeleine for murder. She is tried and released—not as innocent but, under Scottish law, with the charge against her not proven!

There you have the theme, a sordid one but not romantically preposterous since original sin leaves its traces in all of us and one sin leads to others. The film is at pains to make us echo the verdict of "not proven". Ann Todd in the name part has her tempestuous moments, but retains an ice cold eye. She is demure, sly, sometimes appeal-

ingly "fly", often charming. As with the prototype she wins our pity, sometimes our sympathy but not our approval. Nowhere is the worse made to appear the better cause.

The film certainly is long, but it is marked by stimulating camera work and superb direction. The casting is excellent. The final scene of the trial in court is somewhat long, but it has an authentic air about it, and it does provide opportunities for some character *pastiches* by a supporting cast which seems to be recruited from the B.B.C. Repertory Group. Well known actors, such as Leslie Banks and Edward Chapman, subordinate their outstanding powers to the balance of the play as a whole, while Norman Wooland brings a pleasing quality of sincerity to the part of the trusting, disillusioned suitor and Ivan Desny gives us the French cad in all his contemporary spivishness. Elizabeth Sellars as the compliant maid gives a performance which marks her art for promotion.

To sum up we have here a human and true story, carefully treated, well acted, well directed. The moral issues are inherent to the story. Even the strange, withdrawn, dictatorial Victorian father cannot force us to make Madeleine into a heroine. Were it not for human nature itself she would be an enigma. How could a girl in such surroundings behave so?—that is not the enigma. The unanswered question is, was she the murderess? And in that sense, Ann Todd, with her winsome appeal and that cold, cold eye, leaves us with the enigma of Madeleine Smith.

X.

THE ANGEL WITH THE TRUMPET

Starring: Eileen Herlie, Norman Wooland, Basil Sydney. **Producer:** Karl Hartl. **Director:** Antony Bushell. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

Eileen Herlie is much too distinguished an actress to play in this novelettish story, which is full of

clichés and says in a slow rather dull manner all the things that have already been said about Austria, Jews, Hitler, the Nazis and the good old days before the war.

This story about Henrietta Stein (Eileen Herlie) who marries into the famous Alt family of Viennese piano makers, who lived in an 18th century mansion and whose tradition was "to make music and serve God" has one virtue: its lack of character emphasises the height and depth and breadth of Eileen Herlie's personality. There is a quality in her voice, in her manners in her movements, in her "creativity" in what I would like to call her "artistic humility" which gives her the right to be called a great actress.

Apart from a brilliant performance by Eileen Herlie, everything else is second rate. It is not very well directed and the acting is mediocre, with the exception of **Maria Schell who plays Anna Linden with charm and sincerity.**

The morality of this film is phoney. It suggests that happiness consists in "free love" and that the service of God demands a dull loyalty which kills true happiness. Henrietta Stein, is a Catholic, but she ends her sad life by committing suicide. As she goes to her self-appointed death she winds her Rosary around her hands which (to quote the words of a colleague), "Was a great misuse of a holy symbol to lend propriety to an evil act".

E.

CHILDREN'S FILMS

The Mysterious Poacher

When one remembers some of the rubbish, especially from a child's point of view, that is shown on the public screen and is seen week after week by children, it is good to know that films such as this are made for children. Films like this can do no harm to any child, even from the purely mechanical aspect of the mind sopping up whatever is presented to it, for here there is nothing harmful. It is good entertainment, which for children is educational, and is the screen's version of the adventure stories which have delighted children for so many years. The catching of a poacher by a band of children has great possibilities for excitement which are fully realised. The setting of the story helps of course. It is in an Austrian deer forest, and by means of superb photography we are given a clear insight into the work of the gamekeeper. The dialogue is in German, but so good is the direction of Don Chaffey that an English commentary is enough to enable one to follow everything without difficulty. It is impossible

to recommend this film too strongly, and its usefulness for boys and girls who may be studying German is obvious. It runs for 49 minutes.

The Dragon of Pendragon Castle

While lacking the natural advantages of *The Mysterious Poacher*, this film does very well with a more imaginative story about a dragon. This again is a real children's film in which the children have the most important parts and the grown-ups more or less look on. If there are children who like castles and dragons, and impoverished aristocrats saved from homelessness by the adventures of the youngest generation, then this is the film for them. The dragon would deceive anyone who is not too sophisticated to be beneath deception. The running time is 52 minutes.

Both these films are distributed for G.B. Instructional Ltd., by General Film Distributors Limited.

U.

No Place For Jennifer

Starring: Leo Genn, Rosamund John, Beatrice Campbell and Guy Middleton, and introducing Janette Scott. **Distributors:** Associated British Pathé **Director:** Henry Cass. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

In the prayer which for Catholics epitomises the mystery of the Incarnation, are repeated the words first uttered by an angel: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb". This benediction is potentially true of every woman that bears a child. It is the measure of the degradation of this sublime function today that so many women regard their child as an unrelieved burden. What was designed by the Creator as the visible fruit of mutual love given and taken becomes for so many the unwanted sign of self-indulgence.

There is (I think) an unconscious irony in the words which Leo Genn, as the father of Jennifer in this film, uses

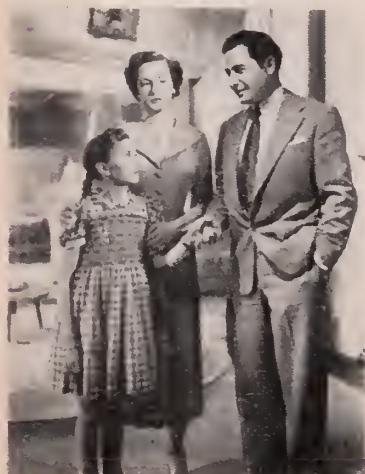
to Beatrice Campbell, her mother, when the child at length finds happiness and security in the bosom of a normal family: "We must see that the Marshalls do not lose by this!" Apparently it does not enter their heads that it is they who have suffered a loss since they were unable to keep their treasure intact.

The film is little more than mediocre from the point of view of production and treatment, but it contains much that the thoughtful viewer will find stimulating. Many of its points are stated bluntly and, some may think, without taste, but it is, unhappily, all too true a picture of modern marital inability to realise the marriage vows.

Little Janette Scott is astonishingly effective as the little girl whose life is shattered by the selfishness of her parents. She gives one of the most perfect child performances seen on the screen for a long time.

Beatrice Campbell is hard and brittle as the mother and Leo Genn gives the necessary impression of vacillating instability as the father. The rest of the cast are adequate.

V.



"Jennifer, trot off and pack your things"



She can't bear to hear it



Look out, there!
Janette Scott—Brian Smith

IT'S A GREAT FEELING

Starring: Dennis Morgan, Doris Day, Jack Carson. **Director:** David Butler. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B.

This is just a "light of heart" picture and is really good fun. A bit slow to begin with, but when it gets going all sorts of things happen, and all sorts of stars—Gary Cooper, Sydney Greenstreet, Edward G. Robinson, Errol Flynn, etc.—pop in and out. There is hope for us all when we can laugh at ourselves. In this film Hollywood laughs at itself with gaiety and abandon, which is, perhaps, a presage of better things to come.

E.

BUCCANEER'S GIRL

Starring: Yvonne De Carlo, Philip Friend, Robert Douglas, Elsa Lanchester. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Director:** Frederick de Cordova. **Producer:** Robert Arthur. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 75 minutes.

This is not the sort of film which would support Very Rev. Fr. Hilary Carpenter's thesis that: "The cinema is the highest form of art". It is about a pretty lady who one day finds herself aboard a pirate vessel. I got the impression that everyone in the film was regarding it as a bit of fun and I have no doubt that many "Fourth Formers" will find it good fun also. I also got the impression that Elsa Lanchester is too talented an actress for this sort of "kids' stuff".

E.

YOUR WITNESS

Starring: Robert Montgomery, with Leslie Banks, Felix Aylmer and Patricia Wayne. **Distributors:** Warner Bros. **Director:** Robert Montgomery. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

A story about an American lawyer who comes to England to help defend his war-time English batman against a charge of murder, gives Robert Montgomery the opportunity to have a lot of fun at the expense of the British legal system, county families and English ways of speech. Though not unkindly meant, one feels that less than justice is done both to the police and the lawyers.

The featured players, Felix Aylmer and Leslie Banks, are perfect in rôles which make no great claims on their ability. Patricia Wayne, whose first film this is, is vivacious and pretty, but has no opportunity to show whether she is anything else. Wylie Watson, Harcourt Williams and Jenny Laird give their customary efficient performances but it is Ann Stephens who carries off the palm for an incredibly drawn but beautifully played character as Ann Summerfield.

Robert Montgomery, of course, is quite at home and convincing as the American lawyer but, if he must direct and act at the same time, he should get somebody else to cut his films. He is much too much in the picture.

V.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 1 and 2)

<i>Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer</i>	(B) (346)
<i>A Handful of Rice</i>	(C) (41)
<i>Any Number can Play</i>	(A) (21)
<i>A Run for Your Money</i>	(C) (20)
<i>A Stranger Walked In</i>	(A) (47)
<i>Bicycle Thieves</i>	(B) (48)
<i>Big Steal, The</i>	(B) (339)
<i>Come to the Stable</i>	(C) (12)
<i>Countess of Monte Cristo, The</i>	(A) (11)
<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	(A) (10)
<i>Crooked Way, The</i>	(A) (346)
<i>Cure for Love, The</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Doctor and the Girl, The</i>	(A) (40)
<i>East of Java</i>	(A) (350)
<i>Forsyte Saga, The</i>	(B) (17)
<i>Great Lover, The</i>	(B) (10)
<i>Great Sinner, The</i>	(B) (18)
<i>Holiday Affair</i>	(C) (46)
<i>Hounded</i>	(A) (9)
<i>Innocence is Bliss</i>	(B) (19)
<i>It Concerns Us All</i>	(B) (41)
<i>Jolson Sings Again</i>	(B) (46)

<i>Landfall</i>	(B) (347)
<i>Look for the Silver Lining</i>	(C) (19)
<i>Martin Roumagnac</i>	(A) (17)
<i>Paid in Full</i>	(A) (40)
<i>Pinky</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Reckless Moment, The</i>	(A) (17)
<i>Red, Hot and Blue</i>	(B) (350)
<i>Rocking Horse Winner, The</i>	(B) (44)
<i>Romantic Age, The</i>	(A) (19)
<i>Sand</i>	(B) (43)
<i>Search, The</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Spider and the Fly, The</i>	(B) (18)
<i>Story of a Ring, The</i>	(C) (46)
<i>Tarzan's Magic Fountain</i>	(B) (45)
<i>Task Force</i>	(B) (45)
<i>Tell it to the Judge</i>	(B) (15)
<i>That Midnight Kiss</i>	(C) (11)
<i>Velvet Touch, The</i>	(B) (347)
<i>White Heat</i>	(A) (9)
<i>You're My Everything</i>	(C) (46)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Christopher Columbus</i>	(B) (183)
<i>Hamlet</i>	(B) (130)
<i>Home of the Brave</i>	(B) (339)
<i>Joan of Arc</i>	(B) (126)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Maytime in Mayfair</i>	(B) (172)
<i>Monsieur Vincent</i>	(B) (230)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B) (70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A) (159)
<i>Visitation</i>	(B) (134)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

German Protestants and Catholics Intensify Film Action

A "Church and Film" study group composed of Protestant clergymen has been formed at Hamburg under the chairmanship of *Rev. Pastor Wilke*, Secretary of the Evangelical Film Committee for the British Zone of Germany. The group organises the showing of current motion pictures followed by a critical discussion. It is also planning to visit film studios and to make itself acquainted with the various techniques of film production, in order to offer practical suggestions to Church authorities and religious organisations.

In the French Zone of Germany, a Catholic Film Conference was held recently at Baden-Baden, under the chairmanship of *Canon Semle*, Dean of Rottenburg Cathedral. Six dioceses were represented by priests and lay leaders. *Father Kochs*, whom the Fulda Conference of the German Hierarchy has put in charge of the co-ordination of Catholic motion picture activities, gave a detailed report, emphasising particularly two recent developments:

(1) the decision of German film producers to accept a system of "self-censorship" under which Catholic and Protestant Church authorities would be consulted on certain matters; (2) the recent establishment of a Federation of Catholic Motion Picture Theatres.

The Baden-Baden Conference adopted a resolution recommending the production of Catholic documentary films as well as the establishment of 16mm. film "Archives" in each diocese.

The "self-censorship" of the German motion picture industry will have its headquarters at Bibrich Castle, near Wiesbaden, in the American Zone. It will be headed by a Committee of fifteen. The Chairman and seven members of the Committee will be appointed by the motion picture industry. The other seven members will represent the Ministries of Education of the West German States, the Evangelical and the Catholic Church and the youth organisations.

(From *Documentation*.)

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THE POPE AND THE CINEMA

(For the convenience of readers of FOCUS, Fr. Declan O'Sullivan, C.P., has made a digest of Pope Pius XI's Encyclical "Vigilanti Cura".)

The Encyclical on the cinema, the "Vigilanti Cura", was issued on June 29th, 1936, and addressed to all Catholic Bishops. Two years' experience of the work done by the U.S. "Legion of Decency" suggested to the Pope to make known his ideas on a matter which closely concerned the moral and religious life of all Christians.

He had treated of this matter on three previous occasions: in his letter on the "Christian Education of Youth" (C.T.S. ed. p. 43), and in two audiences he had given delegates of the International Federation of the Cinema Press, in August 1934, and in April 1936.

On each of these occasions he had made the point that the Cinema, being an Art, must be an educator, something that draws the best, not the worst, out of men.

The Cinema Question is one that concerns all Catholics and not merely those of the U.S.A. The screen is meant to be used in such

a way that it helps us to serve God better. Unfortunately, as the heads of the industry recognised, it was being used to promote evil. They drew up a Production Code to guide them: no film was to be made that cast discredit on any natural or human law, or that made one sympathetic to their being broken.

But the Code was ignored. The "Legion of Decency" was organised, not to injure the Trade, but to strengthen the hands of those who stood behind the Code. Those who joined the Legion pledged themselves to boycott any film which violated the Code, which violated Catholic moral principles or proper standards of living.

Opponents of the Legion prophesied three results: mediocre films, financial collapse of the industry, the boycott would fade away. The opposite happened: the released skill and energy was put into making worthwhile films; people now went confidently to a film show knowing it would be clean, and the Pope relied on the Legion keeping up its good work.

Recreation is a "must" in the world of today. Millions look to the Cinema for this recreation.

But recreation ought to be re-creation, something that makes

us better; hence films that violate decency are sources of temptation, especially to the young, and rot a nation.

The Cinema appeals to a passive audience. They have but to sit back and need do no thinking. Their minds are reached by visual as well as auditory means. Vivid pictures and imaginative sound, the brightly-lit screen in a darkened theatre, hypnotise. If the big things in life, if the sacred things of love and marriage are portrayed in a false setting, in a false light, minds will be twisted. A twisted set of standards by which to judge the desirability of wealth, luxury, justice, truth, loyalty to the home could easily be given to the young if such powerful means as the Cinema were used. And cinemas are everywhere.

It is important that no one incur the curse Our Lord has pronounced on those who corrupt the young. It is important that we see that the Screen is an instrument of good, not of evil.

How is this to be done?

The ideal thing would be to see that none but worthwhile pictures were made. But that is not within our power, as things are. If films are made by Catholics, care should be taken that they are made by people who know their jobs, not by unskilled amateurs. Hence, we must concentrate on influencing those who do make films.

Here, Catholics *in* the industry can be real apostles.

Catholic Actionists should be directed by the Bishops to this field of the apostolate.

The Bishops should take steps to impress on the heads of the Cinema industry how great is their responsibility, not merely to avoid making evil films, but in using the screen's magnificent power to be a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good.

A yearly pledge to boycott unsuitable films should be asked from all their people by the Bishops.

This presupposes a classified list showing what films are suitable, and for whom. An International List of Worthwhile Films would be a valuable tool, but as local conditions dictate what is most suitable in any given place, local lists are the most one can expect.

Such lists should be drawn up by a National Pre-Viewing Office to be of any real use. If he has grave reasons for doing so, any Bishop can modify such lists for use in his diocese. The Catholic Press should carry such lists and so make them known.

Catholic Film Action should be on an international scale and the various National Film Pre-viewing Offices should interchange their lists and ideas.

If the Bishops all over the world do their share in Christianising the screen, all right-thinking people, both Catholic and non-Catholic, will bless them.

This is the wish and the prayer of the Holy Father.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Summer School

It is proving somewhat difficult to find a convent or college willing to take both ladies and gentlemen under the same roof. This is not due to an excess of prudishness but to the lack of appropriate accommodation under the same roof for the two sections of our students. The places that are accustomed to this work are already booked up year by year. Our entry into the Summer School field demands another location. We are continuing with our enquiries. If any readers have brain waves, please pass them on. Remember, the first week in August.

Film Competition

As promised, we announce a new Film Competition. 16mm. films, sound or silent, on any subject, any (reasonable!) length. Entries to be sent in not later than September 30th, 1950. The films will be judged by a jury of experts to be announced later. Each film should be accompanied by a registration fee of 10/-. The Catholic Film Institute reserves the right to exhibit the prize-winning and any other films submitted in any way considered necessary.

Film Library

Readers will notice that our Film Library is extending. We are glad to announce that we now have four of the most celebrated foreign films on our list, *Monsieur Vincent*, *Vivere in Pace*, *Four Steps in the Clouds*, *Farrebique*. We hope soon to make further additions, including *Bicycle Thieves*. We can book any other film on the major lists and we ask you to support us by making use of our services whenever possible. This is not to diminish the support of those libraries who advertise with us or who are located in a region outside our sphere of influence: we have

a specialist clientèle and are introducing the film to people who have not hitherto considered it seriously.

Film Shows

We have had the pleasure of arranging the London Premiere of *Out of the Darkness*, the feature length documentary dealing with the missionary work of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Killeshrandra. It was produced and directed by C. Desmond Toomey and is a great credit to the Irish technicians who worked on it. We shall soon have it on our 16mm. list. In the meantime three special showings of *Out of the Darkness* are taking place at the Hamer Theatre, 113 Wardour Street, London, W.1, at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28th, Wednesday, March 1st, and Thursday, March 2nd. There will be other showings later in other places. In the meantime, talk about this film and begin to make arrangements in your district to have it put on at your local cinema as was the case with *Visitation*. Admission will be free. Tickets obtainable from the Catholic Film Institute, 20 Ovington Square, S.W.3 (by phone: KEN 6849), from the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Killeshrandra, at 317a Portobello Road, London, W.10 (phone: LAD 2082).

Catholic Film Pilgrimage

The Holy Father has made it known that he desires the Film Pilgrimage to take place in May, 25th to 30th inclusive. We are trying to arrange plane bookings for a party from this country and will be glad if any film technician, actor, scriptwriter, or any other person connected with the industry able to join us will let us know as soon as possible. The fare—depending on numbers—will be in the region of £40.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Indian Films

Sir,

An interesting point about Indian films is that they are very particular about modesty of dress with women. The barebacked gowns and free and easy manners, close embracing of English and American films shock them out here. Perhaps we have, after all, something to learn from the Coloured Races.

Yours,
ANTHONY RICARDS.

Raichur,
S. India.

More Attractive Cover

Sir,

I have been making enquiries of my friends as to their knowledge of your publication *Focus*.

A surprising number do not buy it, nor do they read it.

Why?

They thought it was some kind of parish magazine. It looks like one, they explain.

I'll do my best to correct such impressions when I encounter them, but couldn't you also do something to help by designing a more attractive cover?

Yours,
VICTOR A. PEERS.

36 Golden Square,
W.1.

Error of "O"

Sir,

In my review of *Bicycle Thieves* in your last issue, there is an error of figures . . . £25,000, the cost of an average feature film should read £250,000. Since "devaluation" it would be more accurate to put the cost at £300,000.

Yours,
E.



After a conference. O.C.I.C. Venice, 1949

A Visit to a Children's Cinema Club

By Our Educational Panel

From Monday to Friday we are all accustomed to seeing policemen busy ensuring the safety of schoolchildren crossing the roads outside their schools. On Saturday, at a rather later hour, we see the same work going on but the venue this time is the crossings outside the Cinemas. But what goes on inside the Cinema Club is however unknown to most adults, so we decided to see for ourselves what sort of fare is provided for those eager queues. Armed with the necessary permission we too joined the Saturday morning fans. Before the show started we sat in the balcony and watched the youngsters coming in. Boys were certainly in the majority, many of their more useful sisters no doubt staying home to help with the chores. It was strange to form part of so noisy and restless an audience, but we settled down to take stock of all we could.

Most noticeable were the efforts of the management to encourage a sense of unity and of "belonging" to a club, not an easy task, expressed in terms of hundreds of children of varying ages and united artificially for the purpose of "going to the pictures". But the Club camaraderie was certainly there. All those whose birthday had fallen during the week, assembled on the stage to be greeted with the birthday song, the slighter greeting of the girls followed by the deafening bellow of the boys, all in the best of good spirits. The "birthday minors" finally made their separate exits, each saying a few words into the microphone en route. The Cinema Club also has its Club song and this is sung lustily before departure.

The problem of organising the exuberant Club members is met chiefly by the children themselves. With no attempt at regimentation, order is achieved in the admission of the children to their seats, by older boys acting as stewards, with distinctive badges to indicate their authority. These boys are actually elected by the children themselves and once chosen, are respected and obeyed. To them falls the tasks of forming queues for

admission, seeing to lost property and generally supervising behaviour inside and preventing violent disorder. As each child knows the number of his seat and row in the Cinema, there can be no rivalry or dispute over particular places. In this way, a truly democratic system of representation and delegated authority works to the satisfaction of management and children.

The opening film was a Walt Disney Cartoon showing the exploits of an engaging little figure—Goofy—on his travels to and in Africa. There was much really useful Geographical knowledge agreeably presented and the audience enjoyed it all. To us, as educationalists, came a great feeling of regret that there would be no way of ensuring that the children retained some of this useful knowledge. How well we know the necessity for bringing out the significance of what is seen and its relation to what is already known if even part of it is to be absorbed by the young mind.

The Cartoon was followed by the serial *Overland Mail*, a much appreciated Wild West film. Dealing with the perils of taking mail through hostile Indian territory, the film had excitement, suspense and reckless heroes, and was probably the most popular of those shown. It was never alarming for long at a stretch, and in spite of the blowing up of a bridge bearing the mail-wagons, a powerful assault by Indian tribes and the menace of waterfalls and river currents, the mail was finally preserved unscathed. This was an enjoyable and wholesome film ending on a note of high suspense, the horses falling headlong into a deep chasm with nothing which could conceivably check their plunge to death—the audience, however, did not despair.

The Zoo picture which followed proved rather long for our adult span of interest but it certainly held that of the children. The Zoo family were visited in company with a three year old, presumably the

son of a keeper, who was happy and quite unafraid amongst the animals. He provided the connecting link between the scenes and made a tour of the cages for the benefit of the Club members, ending with a tea party with the chimps. This was certainly an attractive way of encouraging the young naturalist.

The second cowboy film emerges less successfully from the reviewers' criticism, and certainly from the children's than does the first. The fact that it was a film of Tim McCoy, a name honourable in the world of cowboys, may have led us to expect too much. The chief defect, however, was the poor sound track which every so often reduced the conversation to an unintelligible confusion of sounds and left the reviewers, finally, uncertain of the story and aware of the villains chiefly through their distinctive cast of countenance, their sinister air and a tendency to confer in locked rooms. Lack of interest in the film was obvious from the start and could be gauged by the volume of noise from the floor, an occasional scrimmage and several departures. This was a serious fault in a film of considerable length, especially when followed by another which also

proved beyond the comprehension of the audience.

This next film was a silent Chaplin. It seems unfair to us, who had enjoyed his great pictures, that the funny little man should be introduced to the youngsters in so poor a film. The scene was laid in a public park, apparently in Edwardian days, and included an amorous couple on a bench. Even Charlie's antics with this couple, and with a nursemaid and a keeper failed completely to interest the children. They mostly turned their backs to the screen and found amusement playing and scuffling about noisily with their neighbours. It became evident again that the children's own reactions form the clearest comment on what they see and we rejoiced to find it such a healthy one.

This programme was seen just before Christmas and it was pleasing to notice how the true spirit of Christmas had been fostered in the Club members. Large numbers of dolls and toys had been brought for distribution in hospitals. The reviewers were impressed throughout at the efforts of those concerned to educate the children in the wider sense and not merely to entertain them.

BOOK REVIEW

International Film Review. 1949.

No. 3. (Published by the International Catholic Cinema Office, Brussels, pp. 64, 5s.)

The third number of this international film quarterly has a British flavour and is varied and full of interest.

In a message sent to O.C.I.C., the Archbishop of Bombay stresses the need for recognising the importance of the film as a medium for reaching the masses. His letter is used to introduce a volume containing many articles pointing out the obligations which fall upon Catholics in this new sphere. Andrew Buchanan goes so far as to visualise a future Order devoted to the production of films.

Topics range from fundamental problems of the cinema to a history of Catholics and films in England, from the Pope and Television to *Scott of the Antarctic*. Such well-known names as Douglas Woodruff, C. A. Lejeune, Fr.

Hilary Carpenter, O.P., Robert Speaight and Charles Ford, appear among the list of contributors. Also included is news of Catholic enterprise from eleven countries, news items of general interest and book reviews.

The review is attractively printed on good paper with an adequate number of well-produced plates; notable is a striking full page of the Anonymous of the "Divine Tragedy". What Fr. Lee, in his review of the first number, referred to as the slightly exotic flavour imparted by the misplacement of inverted commas has not been corrected and tends to irritate. Otherwise typographical errors are few and the whole production gives value for money. It is a "must" for those who believe the film to be more than entertainment—and for those who do not!

From: *The Manager, International Film Review*, 22 Ovington Square, London, S.W.3.

MARGARET ANDERSON.

COVER PERSONALITY

JACK WARNER

It is an unusual thing for film players to graduate via the radio to top place on the screen. Jack Warner is one of the few whose personality was well known before the millions who fill the cinemas week by week had a chance to get to know his handsome and kindly features enlarged by the art of film. His saucy voice with its naughty inflections; his impudent ogling of the programme girls in the Garrison Theatre, his letters from his bruvver in the Life Guards, his "blue pencil" interjections and his descriptions of himself as "a bungler-up of rat 'oles; a rat 'ole bungler-upper" endeared him to a vast radio audience in the early days of the war. Nor was he a one-routine comedian; his imitations of Maurice Chevalier were, in some ways, even better than their original! The brother of Elsie and Doris Waters, the well known radio comedienne, he changed his stage name in order not to seem to shine in reflected glory. There is no doubt, however, that talented as his two sisters are, there could be no reason for saying that he was in any way a passenger or a plagiarist.

His first film was called *The Dummy Talks*, produced by British National Films in 1943, but it was *The Captive Heart*, made by Ealing Studios in 1945, that brought him before the cinema public and showed that we had a new film personality of more than average ability. He played the rôle of a Cockney sergeant, a rôle not too far removed from his cheeky radio conscript, but his next part, that of the gangster in the highly successful *Hue and Cry*, gave promise of a versatility which has been verified with each succeeding film. *Dear Murderer*, *Holiday Camp*, *It Always Rains on Sunday*, *Against the Wind*, the three Huggett films, *Easy Money*, *My Brother's Keeper*, all films in which his versatility was allowed full play. His Scotland Yard detective in *It Always Rains on Sunday* seemed to be a part specially made for him, but so did the suburban householder whose

unimportant life produced crises which made us feel that we knew him very well as the man next door. With Kathleen Harrison he made of the Huggetts a family as endearing as the American Hardy family if a little less socially significant. The escaped convict in *My Brother's Keeper* was another study which got away from Warner's usual style. The curious thing is that he does not use any heavy make-up nor disguise, yet contrives, with his hair combed nearly always in the same manner, to suggest the individuality of the characters he is playing. The spy in *Against the Wind*, the engine driver in *Train of Events*, his rôle as the pool-winning parent in *Easy Money*, were all sufficiently different to be recognisable as such and to keep our attention on the part in question, unlike some other film players who always appear as themselves with different names.

I wager, however, that his latest rôle is likely to win him the affection as well as the respect of cinema-goers in the same way as his "Blue Pencil" soldier did the radio fans. As P.C. Dixon in *The Blue Lamp*, he gives us a roundly moulded, warm, homely personality that will become the epitome of all that is best and most lovable in that much-respected official, the Copper. Warner really enters into the heart of the character and through it into our hearts, and it is a tribute to him to say that one feels a sense of loss akin to that of his fellow characters when, all too soon in the film, he is killed. After *The Blue Lamp* it is instructive to see Jack Warner as the Governor of a Borstal Institution, in some ways a similar rôle, in other ways poles apart; he manages to fill out the part in his own special way and make another friend for us on the screen. He is a great artist. We look forward to many more and varied performances from Jack Warner.

JOHN VINCENT.

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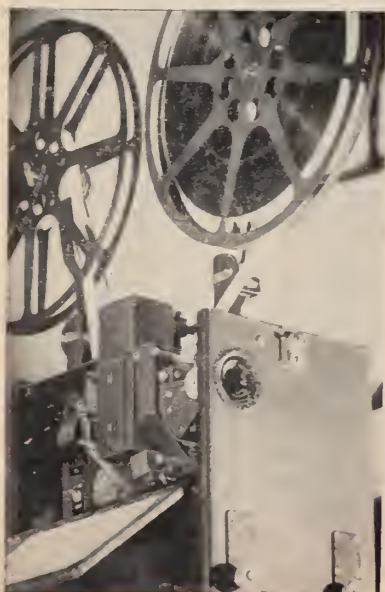
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

APRIL 1950

No. 4

The Cinema and Christianity

This magazine has often recorded the news that there are many Christians in the world of today who approach the making of films in the spirit of the medieval Christian artists who created their works of art to give honour and glory to their Creator and to interpret life in pleasing forms for their fellow-men.

In his article on the Divine Tragedy, in the 2nd issue of "The International Review", Abel Gance says: "The Divine Tragedy which purposes to be, by the Grace of God, at once the most humble and most heart-searching page of the Bible in film of the future, will be made after the manner of the cathedrals . . . it will be the precious fruit of a group of artists, moved by piety and enthusiasm, made so that the people of the whole world may steep themselves afresh in the spring of its words and the light of its images."

In this country more and more Catholics are becoming aware of the part that film can play in re-establishing all things in Christ; and the work of the Catholic Film Institute is growing rapidly, almost too rapidly. It is unfortunate, therefore, that just as Britain is beginning to put into practice the principles laid down by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on films, there should appear, in "The Catholic Herald" an article about the cinema which may create confusion and a feeling of frustration among Catholics.

Mr. G. C. Norman's article is not only untimely, there is much in it that is untrue. It is, in place, for FOCUS, the official organ of the Catholic Film Institute, to say that Mr. Norman's

opinions about the cinema do not accord with Pope Pius XI's encyclical on the cinema.

"Good motion pictures, says His Holiness, are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see them. In addition to affording recreation, they are able to arouse noble ideals of life, to communicate valuable conceptions, to impart a better knowledge of the history and the beauties of the Fatherland and of other countries, to present truth and virtue under attractive forms, to create or at least to favour understanding among nations, social classes, and races, to champion the cause of justice, to give new life to the claims of virtue, and to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world."

It is, in place, for FOCUS to affirm the principle that the wrong use of something which is inherently good does not make the use of that thing evil in itself.

What Francis Thompson said about the art of poetry may be said about the art of film: "Beware how you misprize this potent ally . . . if you have no room for her beneath the wings of the Holy One, there is place for her beneath the webs of the Evil One: whom you discard, he embraces . . . shelter her under the rafter of your Faith; discipline her to the sweet restraints of your household . . . tame her, fondle her, cherish her—you will then no longer need to flee her: Suffer her to wanton, suffer her to play, so that she play round the foot of the cross."

THE EDITOR



Fatima Film

the film itself. The main body of the visuals is concerned of course with Fatima itself. From a photographic point of view, these visuals show a more than ordinary excellence: they cover the subject with great fidelity and have already been rough-cut into their final shape; and this shape of things to come, now left in the proved and artistic hands of Andrew Buchanan, gives promise of a documentary of outstanding excellence.

INSPIRED RENDERING OF MIME

By way of introduction, His Lordship Bishop Craven will tell the story of the original Apparitions and his theme will be very dramatically illustrated by a mime played by the children of St. Antony's School, Mill Hill. The idea of the mime is an inspiration and, even more surely, the children's rendering of it is inspired. I use the word advisedly for, under the guidance of the Franciscan Nuns, these children saw the whole thing as an opportunity to do something for Our Lady, to help her to spread her message to the world. The little Polish girl, who takes the part of Lucia, decided to write to the original Lucia (now a Carmelite) and ask her prayers. For her consolation and delight she received an answer from Lucia who promised to pray specially for her to Our Lady on the day the mime was to be filmed. It is not too much to say that you will see the happy result of those prayers in the moving way that part is played.

Gradually the gathering of material for the Fatima Film is nearing completion. The difficulties of the project, which began very early on and continued till quite recently, are regarded by those of us concerned in the making of the film as sure evidence of the devil's attempt to obstruct it; and they have had the effect of making us all the more determined to complete it. "I can well understand the devil trying to stop this film," said a friend recently. "After all it is going to do him a lot of harm." There can be little doubt but that it will be most effective in spreading far and wide the message of Fatima and thus help to destroy the growing ascendancy of the emissaries of evil.

But what interests us for the moment is the progress and content of

I was myself at St. Antony's that day. It was most moving. The whole mime was a thing of prayer and very real self-sacrifice consciously offered by the children. The little boy who played Francisco said to me: "My legs have been hurting me"—"I'm sorry to hear that," said I.—"Oh well," said the little

By

HILARY J. CARPENTER,

O.P.

Blocks from photos of Fr. McGlynn's statue

chap, "you couldn't expect to be doing a thing like this without having some suffering."

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF LUCIA

Though no attempt was made fortunately, to show Our Lady during the mime, a rather special statue of her has been introduced later in the film. It is one made by Fr. Thomas McGlynn, O.P., of the United States and is the only one of its kind in this country. **It was made under the personal and detailed guidance of Lucia herself.** As Fr. McGlynn has told us in his book "Visions of Fatima", he had made a statue of Our Lady of Fatima which pleased him as an artist, and he obtained permission to take it to Portugal to show to Lucia. To his dismay the latter rejected it—not because it failed artistically ("I know nothing of art, I'm afraid," she said), but because it was not like Our Lady as she had seen her. "Could we not make a statue of Our Lady as you saw her?" asked the artist. "We could try," said Lucia. **The statue used in the film is a copy of the one they made.** "That is as near as anyone could get in a statue to showing Our Lady, as I saw her" said Lucia. And Fr. McGlynn discovered rather to his surprise, that he had also made a work of art without realising it.

FILM OF BEAUTY AND POWER

The theme of the film, which is the theme of Our Lady of Fatima herself, is summarised in the symbol of the Immaculate Heart of Mary—a heart surrounded by a crown of thorns—which Lucia saw on Our Lady's breast. This symbol, taken from the McGlynn statue, appears at the beginning and at the end of the film. Visuals and



sound are being combined to set forth this theme in a simple yet most moving way; and because this theme is essentially one of profound truth and goodness, because the visuals and sound are being presented by expert craftsmen, and above all because of the integrity of the artist who will finally fashion it, *Pilgrimage to Fatima* will undoubtedly, one might even say inevitably, be a film of great beauty as well as power.

We have long hoped to be able to arrange the *première* of the film for Our Lady's month of May. This may yet be possible. Meantime we crave the co-operation of your prayers that the thing we do may be pleasing and useful to her who is called the Help of Christians.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 3—THE WAY FILMS VARY

When introducing this Course I advised organisers of study groups to draw a chart illustrating the construction of the industry, broadly divided into Production, Distribution and Exhibition. If a poster board is used and shown at each meeting, it will be found invaluable for reminding students of the shape of the industry, particularly as it should be added to as the Course proceeds. In this, the second lesson, additions will be made to the three main divisions, for both the sizes of films and their contrasting purposes are to be discussed.

In the professional industry, films are divided into two categories—Features and Shorts, the former covering all subjects over 3,500 feet. The usual length of a Feature is around 9—10,000 feet, and as films run at a speed of 90 feet per minute, it will be seen that a Feature plays for about one and a half hours; occasionally longer. All films are divided into reels of 1,000 feet, or less, but not more. Some commercial short films such as cartoons are one reel in length, but most are two reels, the second being less than 1,000 feet, total footage being about 1,500. News reels are under 1,000 feet, often 750 feet. The commercial cinema programme of today consists of a first Feature, a shorter second Feature, a news reel, occasionally a short film, and a few advertising trailers which, together, play for about three hours. Groups should discuss this programme length, and carry out some research into audience reaction. Is it too long? Do most filmgoers like as much as they can get for their money? Is there a desire for a return to the single feature programme supported by short films?

The next division on the chart is under Distribution, separated into Theatrical and Non-Theatrical, which results in two parallel industries with quite different purposes. The term, Theatrical, is applied to all commercially-released films in cinemas. Non-Theatrical covers all films made for shows unrelated to cinemas, such as subjects for religious, scholastic, medical, scientific and industrial purposes.

Students should here report on their personal experiences of such shows, and list down their value, and also whether presentation was equal to or far below cinema standards. Were the films bright and clear, and the sound perfectly audible? If not, discuss whether this was due to inexpert projection, faulty projectors, unsuitable acoustic conditions, or halls which were not properly blacked-out. Later in the course we will discuss the ways in which the films themselves can be the cause of poor visibility and audibility.

*

Theatrical films are all on 35mm. standard size film stock. Non-Theatrical films are usually on 16mm. sub-standard stock. Other smaller sub-standard sizes are 9.5mm. and 8mm. The organiser should endeavour to obtain short lengths of film in all sizes and pin them on to the chart for comparison.

Standard film is projected through heavy, permanently-fixed machines containing high intensity arcs which throw a very powerful beam across the cinema auditorium. 16mm. films are shown on small portable projectors containing an electric lamp ranging

from 100 to 1,000 watt. It is because of portability that 16mm. has become the recognised size for Non-Theatrical shows. Also, this sub-standard stock is non-inflammable, whereas professional films are on inflammable stock, and the regulations for fire prevention in cinemas are numerous and strictly enforced. The projection box is completely divided off from the auditorium, and should the film catch fire, projectors are shut off in a moment and iron shutters fall over the glass apertures in the wall through which the film is projected.

*

The general assumption is that 16mm. films are made with 16mm. cameras. In some instances this is so, but as many professional companies are producing non-theatrical films, and prefer working in standard size stock, the films are first made on 35mm., and then reduced in the film laboratory to 16mm. There is a division of opinion as to whether better quality

is obtained by filming direct on 16mm., or by the reduction method.

To conclude this lesson, students are advised to record the divisions within the industry for future reference: Production; Distribution; Exhibition; Features and Shorts; Theatrical and Non-Theatrical; Standard and Sub-Standard stock.

The next lesson, No. 4 in the Course, will be devoted to a study of the commercial cinema programme, and its influence over the individual.

*

I should be interested to know of any Film Study Groups which have been or are about to be organised as a result of this Course, and the extent to which the suggested Syllabus of Study is proving helpful. If Organisers care to write to me, I shall be pleased to advise on any problems they may have relating to the running of the Course.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Kindly send donation to:

Rev. J. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	230	8	0	Malta Catholic Institute	14	0	
Miss E. Ackerman ...	1	0	0	V. M. Pendleton ...	3	0	
"Catholic Youth and Family" (A Durban Publication) ...	10	0		Dr. C. B. Burdett Smith	1	6	
					£232	16	6

Our Trumpet

The original film of *The Angel with the Trumpet* was made in Austria. And it included some excellent and authentic shots of a bishop officiating at a wedding. But the accompanying sound-track was, of course, in German.

The time is past when it was thought in the studios that "anything does for church stuff". And so when it was decided to incorporate the sequence in the British film, the person responsible for the English sound-track consulted a copy of the Catholic marriage service used in England. But this is different in form as well as in language from that used in Austria.

The procedure adopted to cope with the ensuing problem was ideal in its correctness. A Catholic connected with the studio rang up the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Westminster and asked if a priest might be allowed to advise on the subject. The reply was that for the sake of authenticity it would be as well that a priest should not only advise, but undertake the matter, and the inquirer was referred to Fr. Burke, as secretary of the C.F.I. But he happened to be abroad at the time, and eventually, contact was made with me.

My voice seems fated to be associated with screen bishops. When I assisted the Director in the scene of the blessing of the fishing nets in *Lisbon Story*, he insisted that the bishop should bless the people as well as the nets. The actor whom I had cast for the part of the bishop had an impressive presence, but could not sing. So I was asked on the spur of the moment to sing the blessing myself. I had to improvise from memory since I had not included a copy of the Pontifical among the car load of

ecclesiastical equipment which I had brought to Elstree. The result was that the chant was not quite accurate, though near enough not to cause comment.

At Shepperton the first task was to write the script for the short extract from the marriage service. It was restricted by the fact that the visuals were already in existence; we had to work strictly to their pattern. My ideal was to produce a translation of the German which was euphonious and rhythmical and at the same time reminiscent of the words familiar to English Catholics who might see the film.

We twice saw the piece of film in question and heard its original sound-track. The supervising editor had made a literal translation and he and I between us produced a version which was finally satisfactory to us both. Then I spoke the words before a recording microphone. A record was also made of an actor speaking the same words. But those who recognise my voice more easily than I do have assured me that it was used.

Some people who see *The Angel with the Trumpet* may think that friendly overtures and willingness to accept collaboration from a member of the C.F.I. should have been met with the cold assertion that priests should not encourage films about Catholics unless the characters invariably live up to their religion. But that would have been to invite the rejoinder that not until all Catholics in real life live up to the principles of the Church may we expect to see the same in the pictures.

Vox Episcopi.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

THE ASTONISHED HEART

Starring: Noel Coward, Celia Johnson and Margaret Leighton. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Co-Directors:** Anthony Darnborough and Terence Fisher. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

This film demands intelligence and sympathy in the beholders in order that it may be appreciated at its true worth. It is a further indication that its author has depths of religious sentiment, which both his admirers and detractors are unwilling (or unable?) to perceive. On the surface it is a scintillating essay in the best Coward style on the subject of the strong man's enslavement by passion. It might be called "The Good Pagan's Failure". But it is more. It is a moral parable. As was said of the parables in the New Testament, "Those that have eyes to see, let them see".

Its title is significant. Astonishment of heart is one of the curses laid upon those who reject the commandments of God. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter xxviii, we read: "If thou wilt be true to the commandments of the Lord thy God and follow the paths He has chosen, He will make thee a people set apart for Himself . . . but if thou refuse to listen to Him and carry out faithfully all the commandments . . . *the Lord will drive thee distracted, all benighted and crazed in thy wits till thou wilt grope thy way at noon like a blind man in the dark and lose thyself*". The Authorised Version renders the sentence I have italicised as follows: "The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart". It follows, therefore, that the astonished heart is one who has rejected or tried to live without God and His commandments.

It has been said that the characters in Noel Coward's film are unreal. That is not my experience. They seem all too pitifully recognisable in the contemporary scene. Every priest has met them: well-bred, pagan rationalising their emotional reactions, somewhat disdainful of the vulgar eroticism of the herd, despising the need of religious persons to invoke supernatural assistance in maintaining self control, bewildered and humiliated when they themselves fall victim to the weakness of unaided nature.

Dr. Faber is a successful psychiatrist whose detached and clinical attitude towards the sexual aberrations of his patients suffers a severe shock under the calculated assaults of the beautiful Leonora Vail. Submitting himself, as he thinks, clinically, to the delights of an "affair", he discovers that he is entangled like any common adulterer and suffers the pangs of jealousy and humiliation and frustration like any of his own patients. Smitten with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart, he gropes his way like a blind man in the dark and in the manner customary with his godless tribe, he seeks to destroy himself. His wife, devoted and loving but also ignorant of the supernatural sheet-anchor she lacks, seeks to rationalise the situation as merely a form of biological sickness, sends her husband away with Leonora "to get it out of his system". When he lies dying, she sends for Leonora, whose name is on his lips, but she has the satisfaction of hearing her rival say that the end came with a reassuring message to his wife that he was now no longer submerged in the darkness of astonishment.

Superficially the film would merit dismissal, but far from teaching promiscuity, it points the lesson that such a way of life is essentially joyless and miserable. Its main moral weakness is that it carries the suggestion

that man is incapable of controlling his passions. If the implication of the title that, without divine grace man must fall, is intended, then this is a most moral story.

The production is excellent. Beautifully made, finely photographed, excellently acted, this is a film that intelligent adults may delight in. Celia Johnson as the wife repeats the perfection of her performance in *Brief Encounter*. She is a great actress. Margaret Leighton is an apt foil in the hands of Director and Scriptwriter. Noel Coward reveals unexpected depths of emotional power in the later scenes of disillusionment. The dialogue is the usual scintillating and brittle Coward argot.

V.

A CHANCE TO LIVE

March of Time, No. 1. 15th Year.
20th Century-Fox.

If you have half a chance of seeing *A Chance to Live*, take it and see it. Fascinating to anyone, and appealing especially to Catholics, it traces in an unaffected and moving way the work for uncared-for boys that Monsignor



Carroll-Abbing started in a cellar of Rome, which he called "Shoeshine Hotel". This project, with the financial help of Americans and the Italian Government, prospered marvelously and developed into several self-governing republics for boys, which can now accommodate 2,000 boys and have already helped nearly 20,000.

We see how the project works on an individual, Carlo, who comes to Santa Marinella as an abject and sullen lad, and we watch his gradual development

into a useful and happy citizen. It is a pleasant story, reminiscent of the grand work of St. John Bosco, and of the modern experiment of "Boys' Town". The only pity is that the film is but nineteen minutes long, and consequently the shots are all too short. But it would be difficult to find any other nineteen minutes so packed with interest and with charm.

G.

LONG IS THE ROAD

Dialogue in Yiddish, German, Polish, English. English sub-titles.

Directors: H. S. Fredersdorf and M. Goldstein. **Producer:** A. Weinstein. Produced by: IFO-International Film Organisation.

This propaganda film fails for a variety of reasons. Its purpose is to show that the only solution for the long suffering European Jews is their speedy admission to Palestine. The skilful blending of actual documentary shots of the horrors of Belsen and other camps, with excellent acting goes a long way towards arousing our sympathy for these unhappy people. What causes a certain reserve is the feeling that this is in bad taste. Is it really a good thing to specialise in the suffering of one section of all those who groaned under the Nazi terror? The concentration camps were not a preserve of the Jewish race. Over and above that there is the unhappy impression that the demand of the film for living space in Palestine ignores completely the rights of the Arabs. Two wrongs are never likely to make a right.

From the technical point of view the film leaves a great deal to be desired. The voice of the American commentator is far too urgent. As a background to this combination of documentary and well acted tragedy what is required is a very quiet and impersonal voice. What is given is an irritating over-emphasis. The film suffers from being too long and this fault is more in evidence because so much of the general action of the story has been presented before in *The Search*.

J. C.

ADAM'S RIB

Starring: Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, with Judy Holliday, Tom Ewell, David Wayne.
Producer: Lawrence Weingarten.
Director: George Cukor. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A.
Category: A. **Running time:** 101 minutes.

Judged by censorious rule of thumb, this picture is not very promising. It contains an attempted murder and a new aspect of "the unwritten law". But because life is regarded as it is, with a complete and somewhat sardonic detachment from ethical issues, the film is less to be condemned than those which attempt to grapple with problems and solve them incorrectly. The lightness of touch displayed is not without entertainment value for seasoned minds.

Adam and Amanda Bonner are both attorneys as well as husband and wife. And Amanda's championship of equality for women leads her to defend a woman whom Adam is prosecuting. This situation provides material for comedy, satire and farce and Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn rise to such occasion as there is. But far more amusing is a character study by Judy Holliday. The polishing of a good script into brilliance by her acting is something well worth seeing.

Q.

RIDING HIGH

Starring: Bing Crosby, Coleen Gray, Charles Bickford, and Frances Gifford. A Paramount Picture.
Producer and Director: Frank Capra. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 112 minutes.

The name of the man who made such outstanding films as *You Can't Take It With You*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, leads one to expect something a critic can take a holiday over. *Riding High* is a grievous disappointment. Mr. Capra's obsession with money as the prime cause of discontent in the affairs of man, is honoured to the extent of an irascible and ill-mannered old businessman whose sons-in-law are made the

managing stooges of his various manufacturing interests. But then the next son-in-law elect, Bing Crosby, decides to rebel and go on training the last horse left in his unsuccessful stables. This horse, called Broadway Bill, loves to dance around its master, carries a pet rooster on its back, catches a cold through a draughty stable, is cured in time for the great race, runs away with a crooked jockey, only to burst its heart after it has won fame and fortune for Mr. Crosby, and is then buried with all the ceremony due to a loyal friend and comrade. We learn that Broadway Bill's life and death are a great example to American citizens (human variety): the only thing they leave out is R.I.P. and the Dead March.

The ethical code of Mr. Crosby and his associates is rather curious: when in need of money to register his horse in the race, he sends his friends to try out variations on the confidence trick with evident success. I hope this is not intended to do more than entertain the young idea. Bing, of course, sings, though he is now a little mature for the sort of thing they expect him to do on the screen. The production is average fair and safe for teen-agers (doubtful ethics excepted).

V.

WHEN WILLIE COMES MARCHING HOME

Starring: Dan Dailey, Corinne Calvet, Colleen Townsend, with William Demarest. **Director:** John Ford.
Producer: Fred Kohlmar.
Distributors: 20th Century-Fox.
Certificate: U. **Category:** C.
Running time: 82 minutes.

In one way it would be true to call this film a comedy of errors—though that statement does not imply a slur on the technique or production. According to the poster, it is the "biggest parade of laughs". There was not one really funny sequence in it though there were one or two quite humorous ones. The whole story is built on a wartime situation and features recruiting, airfields, furloughs, etc. In order to justify this five years after the end of the war, an outstanding plot is required, or else outstanding performance. Neither was in evidence here. The whole thing is rather ordinary, except

for the hero's four-day adventure which includes a return trip from America to France and involves baling-out, hiding with the Maquis, seeing the launching of a V-2, escape by motor launch, getting hopelessly drunk, and an interview with the brass-hats in Washington. However, it is a harmless and mildly exciting film. While I would not recommend it as a top grade priority, if it is just a question of an evening out at the cinema, you could do much worse than spend it seeing Willie come marching home.

P. F.

THREE CAME HOME

Starring: Claudette Colbert, Patric Knowles, Florence Desmond and Sessue Hayakawa. **Producer:** Nunnally Johnson. **Director:** Jean Negulesco. **Distributors:** 20th Century - Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 106 minutes.

The cinema is frequently criticised for providing mere "escapes" from real life. Here we have the reverse. In this film we escape from the so-called "real" world of the superficial and complacent post-war age into the grim reality of prison camps from which there is no escape. For most of the running time of this film we are plunged into concentration camps in which the Japanese held the American civilians of North Borneo for the duration of the war. We would like to think that this is all fiction, but the film is based on the autobiography of Agnes Newton Keith, who, with her husband and small son, were held prisoners for the greater part of the war.

In a cast consistently good, Claudette Colbert and Sessue Hayakawa are outstanding. The former, with admirable restraint and sincerity, portrays all the anguish and heroism of a wife, torn from her husband and thrust into a prison camp with her young boy. Sessue Hayakawa, as the Japanese Colonel in charge of the camp, keeps us wondering what lies behind his oriental expression and politeness. Is it sinister cruelty, or something more human? It is worth while seeing this film to find out.

And worth while to see how this moving story concludes.

G.

THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

Starring: Alistair Sim and Margaret Rutherford, with Joyce Grenfell, Guy Middleton, Muriel Ake, Edward Rigby and Richard Wattis. **Producer and Director:** Frank Launder. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

If you can accept the basically disturbing factor of a girls' school being inadvertently allocated to share accommodation with a boys' college, a mistake that is by no means impossible when one considers the peculiarities which govern the minor departments of the Ministry of Education you have the ground for a delicious piece of farce salted with satire. Alistair Sim as the Headmaster, a man of tortuous mental processes, is faced by Margaret Rutherford, the Headmistress, a woman of masterful tenacity of purpose and by no means over-awed by a mere male. Between them a state of suspended belligerency is arrived at when their self-interest demands co-operation. The Governors of the Boys' College choose to visit the place at the same time as some of the girls' parents, anxious to inspect their offsprings' new school. This situation demands a positively superhuman effort in Box and Coxery. The boys and girls themselves, faced with the crisis, temporarily suspend their own private war in order to defeat the common enemy.

The cast is superb, with Margaret Rutherford and Alistair Sim a dead heat for first place. Joyce Grenfell as Sports Mistress, Guy Middleton as a Sports Master with a roving eye and a gambling instinct, Richard Wattis as a disgruntled Maths Master and Gladys Henson as an imperturbable Matron are particularly worth watching.

Such a plot, of course, has to be treated with the lightest of touches in order to avoid danger and it may be said that, with the exception of one or two lines that are somewhat riskily allusive, in this it is successful. Still, I cannot think why the Censor gives it a "U" Certificate. Its dialogue and situation is too spicy to suit adolescent palates, even though the rough and tumble may give it the appearance of a school-boy yarn.

V.

BAGDAD

Starring: Maureen O'Hara, Paul Christian, Vincent Price.
Producer: Robert Arthur.
Director: Charles Lamont.
Presented by Universal-International. *Certificate:* U.
Category: B. *Running time:* 81 minutes.

In *Bagdad* we have the story of an English-educated daughter of a Bedouin tribal prince, who returns to Bagdad to find her father murdered and her people a prey to unscrupulous intrigue between the occupying Turkish power and rival tribal leaders. It all comes right in the end, and we fade out on the lovers embracing under the desert moon, etc. On the synopsis sheet we were promised 1,001 pleasures, 1,001 adventures, 1,001 delights. If we had been given even those, we should not have complained. As it was, all that was missing and there was nothing to take its place.

The film opens by establishing the mysterious atmosphere of the East with dialogue in the second person singular, such as: "Know thou that in future thou shalt do as I, thy princess, commandest thee". After a couple of minutes of that, the strain is too much and it lapses into American, but the stage is set. The Princess Marjan, lately come out of England, and so riding in the desert in the dinkiest little silk hat and the cutest riding habit of silver grey, finds a convenient merchant to supply her with the latest Paris fashions in evening gowns, and thus equipped she is able to avenge her father's murder. The emphasis is very much on the right sort of clothes. The film is full of pleasant little details like that, but as nothing connects with anything else, it is impossible to give an adequate idea of it. If there were anything in it worth seeing, I would say, see it for yourselves. But despite the technicolor and the technical advice of Mahmud Shaikhaly, this film is the bottom. Quite honestly it is, I think, the worst I have ever had the misfortune to see.

U.

BITTER RICE (Riso Amaro)

Starring: Silvana Mangano, Vittorio Gassman and Doris Dowling.
Director: Giuseppe de Santis.
Certificate: A. *Category:* A.
Running time: 103 minutes.

The early films of the Italian renaissance owed much of their excellence to the fact that they were the work of one creative mind. The Italian film makers now show signs of falling into the Hollywood and Pinewood mistake of supposing that the more people engaged on a film the better the film. It is a disturbing fact that six people were engaged to write the script of *Bitter Rice*. That is perhaps the reason why a story which has intrinsic possibilities of a high order emerges as a muddled melodrama quite out of keeping with the character of the sturdy Italian types who are its main pre-occupation. It concerns the annual exodus of Italian girls to the rice fields in the Po valley. Working under difficult conditions in waterlogged swamps, the girls live in insanitary dwellings and dream rosy and unlikely dreams of marital conquests and cinematic hereafters.

A jewel thief and his unwilling admirer board the rice train and the stolen necklet is concealed in the rice girls' quarters. Eventually the jewels cause the downfall of one girl and the salvation of another. There are dramatic scenes of flooding and a completely unlikely suicide and very stupid rice-offering tribute to the dead girl, whose weakness is the main cause of the disaster. The British censor has eliminated two of the most objectionable scenes and the remainder is a photographically beautiful but filmically disappointing story of rice, rain, robbery and revenge in the flood waters of the River Po.

Silvana Mangano is obviously more interesting to the director physically than histrionically. Vittorio Gassman is a handsome person in the Mature tradition. The best work comes from Doris Dowling and Raf Vallone.

A film for adults who prefer pictures to films.

V.

Morning Departure

Starring: John Mills,
Richard Atten-
borough, with Nigel
Patrick, L a n a
Morris, Peter Ham-
mond. **Producer:**
Jay Lewis. **Direc-
tor:** Roy Baker.
Distributors: G.F.D.
Certificate: A.
Category: B. **Run-
ning time:** 102
minutes.



Lieut.-Cmdr. Armstrong (John Mills) is given a packet of sandwiches by his wife (Helen Cherry)



Lieut. Manson (Nigel Patrick) takes over



Rose Snipe asks her husband (Richard Attenborough) for more money

If I were in a cynical mood I should suggest that as John Mills was so successful in an Antarctic crisis, a sunken submarine was just where we might expect to find him next. Again we have domestic preludes followed by a catastrophe for men only. And different types of people, thrown together in a solitary and prolonged emergency, produce a dramatic situation which is far from original.

The Chief Engineer has to be a Scotsman and there is bound to be an Irishman in the crew. The young man who suffers from panic (Richard Attenborough) and the cook so conspicuously devoid of refinement (James Hayter who deserves more publicity than has been assigned to him for an important part very well played), inevitably recall *Journey's End*.

But the fact remains that the British can do these semi-documentary, emotionally understated films of soft-pedalled heroism very well. And they have done it again. I strongly recommend this first-rate picture. Even those who are sensitive to tragedy and/or claustrophobia should not find it unduly distressing because the emotional atmosphere is so deliberately calm.



John Mills as Lieut.-Comdr. Armstrong; Richard Attenborough as Stoker Snipe; Nigel Patrick as Lieut. Manson; James Hayter as A.B. Higgins. Their submarine, "The Trojan" hits a mine

The end deserves special commendation from Christians. As the four remaining members of the crew face almost certain death the Captain suggests that they might join in spirit with the Sunday service in the dockyard. The cook thinks that for him it doesn't seem hardly right, after never bothering about suchlike, to ask a person for things because you are in trouble. The Captain gently replies that he is sure He doesn't take that view. And so, as the film ends, the Captain is reading the Anglican prayer, so familiar in the Navy, about lawful occasions and the rest.

There was unusually little applause after the film, but I don't think that was due to lack of appreciation, but to a feeling that it would be out of place. I wrote the above lines before C. A. Lejeune's remarks to the same effect were published. But at the time I suspected that I was not the only one who wanted to slip out quickly and quietly, not because my eyes were moist with harrowed emotion—a harrowing situation could not have been treated less harrowingly—but because I didn't want to talk to anyone until the lump in my throat had subsided.



Waiting and Watching



Trapped in the submarine

The Red



A young officer falls in love with a refugee

Starring: Walter Pidgeon, Ethel Barrymore, Janet Leigh, with Francis L. Sullivan, Peter Lawford, Louis Calhern, Angela Lansbury. **Producer:** Carey

Wilson. **Director:** George Sidney.

Certificate: A. **Category:** A.

Running time: 119 minutes.

The story of Bruce Marshall's novel of occupied Vienna (published 1947) is concerned on the large scale with the ineptitude and the stupid as well as brutal inhumanity of the political decision that the Soviet authorities should be helped in the forcible repatriation of Russian Displaced persons. On the smaller scale it sharpens to the incident of a "decent" enough Colonel Nicobar, D.S.O., M.C., who finally jibs against this with surprisingly successful results, but too late to avert the suicide of a lovely Russian girl, who has already been handed over by him once and then escaped for a brief spell of liberty. The story brings in a susceptible young

officer who falls in love with the refugee, as well as certain well-drawn army types, including the General from the War House, the Brigadier, that "dim bull", Colonel Omicron, and the A.T.S. officer, Andrey Quail, a concupiscent half-wit.

Nicobar and his Staff are billeted on a convent where, despite his own lazy scepticism, he makes great friends of Rev. Mother Auxilia, with her simple, business-like faith. It is this friendship which gradually narrows down the challenge to injustice and scepticism alike.

It is interesting to see how this long but not tedious film follows the book. It does so extraordinarily faithfully. This fidelity I found, with one exception, fascinating and pleasing. Much of my pleasure there is probably due to the inspired casting. The



The Russian Colo



Walter Pidgeon . . . Robert Corte

Danube

exception is that the dramatic content is really complete with the death of the girl and the awkward protestations of regret from the British officers concerned. All the fun of Nicobar's promotion and the disconcerting arrival of Mrs. Omicron are by way of anticlimax.

Walter Pidgeon gets into the skin of Colonel Nicobar. Ethel Barrymore knows what she is doing as Mother Auxilia, even when forcing the embarrassed Nicobar to take her to Rome by air so that she can have a talk with the Pope about the condition and needs of the world. Janet Leigh's part of the young Russian girl is appealingly lovely. Peter Lawford is the nice young major, and Angela Lansbury plays Audrey Quail, whose part has been expanded into that of quite a nice girl really. Francis L.



awkward questions



The Russian refugee is given "sanctuary"

Sullivan fits Colonel Omicron like a large sized glove. The Russian Colonel is not caricatured by Louis Calhern out of all semblance of humanity.

The direction has many good moments. I liked particularly the tension as Colonel Piniev strode slowly up and down the convent chapel, searching the faces of the nuns to discover the hiding Maria Buhlen, while the soft murmur of the community prayers goes on without interruption.

The film has the wit, the compassion and the anger of the novel. The compassion is challenging, the anger corrosive. It could, I fear, be construed as an attack on British stupidity. It could, but unjustly. It is rather a salutary and, indeed, uncomfortable exposure of what Mother Auxilia calls "the brutality of men who deny God", whether explicitly in the case of the Russians or implicitly in the case of others nearer home.

Perhaps, therefore, it is as well that this British story comes from Hollywood, for the Americans are apt nowadays to be more realistic and less inhibited about these things than we are. Don't miss *The Red Danube*.

X.



Angela Lansbury . . . Peter Lawford



In Snow-man's Land



When Relief Comes



BATTLEGROUND

Starring: Van Johnson, John Hodiak, Ricardo Montalban, George Murphy. **Director:** William A. Wellman. **Producer:** Dore Schary. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 121 minutes.

This film records, without undue emphasis, the heroic part that the Americans played in the last war at Bastogne. It is beautifully made and directed and there is a pleasing freshness and originality about it. I found it interesting, sometimes thrilling, often humorous and often poignant. The soldiers in the picture are no picture soldiers, they are tough guys with hearts of gold and no two of them are alike. *Battleground* is good cinema.

"What's the point of showing a war film at this date?" someone said to me after the press show. "What's the point of writing history and recording heroic deeds," I replied. We owe it to these men who "carried on" and faced unimaginable hardships with courage and with humour, to record in the modern language of film their heroic deeds. There is a quiet grandeur and nobility about this film and I thought the climax, when the sun shines and sky is filled with planes bringing relief was superb. This is a war-picture with a difference.

E.

AFRICA SCREAMS

Starring: Bud Abbott, Lou Costello. **Producer:** Edward Nassour. **Director:** Charles Barton. Released through United Artists. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 80 minutes *approx.*

So far as I am concerned Abbott and Costello are not so much an acquired taste as an out-worn one. Children will find the film amusing. Abbott and Costello among the lions and savages of Africa.

T.

Out of the Darkness

Writer, Producer and Director: C. Desmond Toomey. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 70 minutes.

When I asked a friend the other day if he had seen the new Missionary film, *Out of the Darkness*, his immediate rejoinder was "No. Is it the same film?" By which he meant, is it a replica of that other very fine Missionary film, *Visitation*, which made such a great impression nearly three years ago?

Inevitably *Out of the Darkness*, which also describes Missionary work in Nigeria, recalls *Visitation* and invites comparison with it. But there is a fresh element introduced into this new film in the form of a narrative interest. The story of the village chief's daughter who wants to become, first a Catholic and then a Missionary Sister, and of the determined opposition of her father to both projects, is sufficiently well done

to hold the interest throughout. These Africans seem to be natural actors, and there is no suggestion of artificiality in the unfolding of the simple story.

The film gives a good idea of the training which the Sisters undergo at the Mother House at Killeshandra and later on of the magnificent educational and medical work which they are doing in Nigeria. There is much beautiful photography, including a particularly imaginative shot of a clothing at Killeshandra. The commentary, spoken by three different commentators, is good, although some may share my own opinion that the introduction of a feminine voice is a mistake.

Unfortunately at the first showing the sound left much to be desired, but I am told that the theatre was partly responsible for this and that it is better in a different theatre.

This film should not be missed. Those who saw *Visitation* will not, I think, feel that they are being treated to a slight variation on the original theme. Rather will they find that their interest is held from start to finish and they will once more be filled with admiration and gratitude at the work which these devoted and selfless women are accomplishing.

M. M.

CHAIN LIGHTNING

Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Eleanor Parker, with Raymond Massey and Richard Wharf. **Director:** Stuart Heisler. A Warner Bros. Production. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* D. *Running time:* very long.

Jet propelled aircraft leaving loving fleecy streams in their wake, American Air Force officers, big business and invention (in that order) in aircraft production, tough heroics and rather irrelevant love, Bogart, Eleanor Parker and Massey—and you have all to be remembered in this film of action. It reminded me of that excellent magazine of my youth, the "Boys' Own Paper".

X.

New Missionary Film

Owing to popular demand the film

Out of the Darkness

will be shown again at the

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dates inclusive

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STROMBOLI AND VOLCANO

A CLARIFICATION

There has been much mischievous publicity connected with Roberto Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman. It has been stated in the press that their latest film, *Stromboli*, is to be banned on account of the undesirable publicity which has been associated with their names. With these reports goes the statement that the Vatican (sic) has banned Catholics all over the world from seeing *Volcano*, the Italian film starring Anna Magnani.

The Vatican is not in the habit of making judgment about films, bad or good. The proper office erected to deal with films in Italy is the **Centro Cattolico Cinematografico**, which, like the Catholic Film Institute, is affiliated with the O.C.I.C. The C.C.C. has condemned *Volcano* but such condemnation does not operate outside Italy. In accordance with the directives contained in the Film Encyclical of Pius XI, it is explicitly stated that each country must arrange for its own system of film classification. *Volcano*, therefore, will be treated on its merits in each country. It may well be that in England, for instance, the British Board of Film Censors will demand deletions which will make it unobjectionable from our point of view. The various National Film Offices affiliated with the O.C.I.C. keep each other informed as to the length and category of the films produced in their country. In this way it is easy to see whether the complete film is being offered to the public.

In the case of *Stromboli*, a letter from the American Catholic Legion of Decency informs us that they have placed it in their category of films considered *Morally Unobjectionable For Adults*. This assures us that it is morally satisfactory whatever may remain to be said about it on artistic grounds.

While the technical merits of films may in certain cases be excellent and their moral content satisfactory, it does present us with a difficult situation when the private behaviour of persons like Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman are given extensive publicity; there is a measure of scandal that cannot be dismissed. Public opinion needs to be encouraged to resist this salacious appeal to its lowest instincts for cheap sensationalism. It is a pity that otherwise quite reputable film critics are willing to repeat and print items about film stars, particularly Catholics who have abandoned their loyalty to the Church which are, of their nature, quite unlikely to be true. So the story that Ingrid Bergman is to be received into the Church. This is not impossible, but it is at the moment unlikely and a condition would be that she would need to dissociate herself from her present partner. Catholic Film Action has a lot to do before the wishes of Pius XI are realised. Prayer is necessary for those who are deluded by the glamour of film publicity.

J. A. V. B.

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LUXEMBOURG GALA

O.C.I.C. Award to "SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC"

For the second year in succession the charming city of Luxembourg has been the scene of a ceremony which illustrates the constructive approach of the International Catholic Cinema Office to the art of cinema. On February 3rd, in the presence of a distinguished gathering of diplomats and the presidents and secretariats of more than 49 international Catholic action groups, presided over by the Co-adjutor Bishop of Luxembourg, Charles Frend, the director of the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, received the Special Diploma awarded to this film at the Venice Festival last year.

In making the presentation, Father John A. V. Burke, the President of the International Jury nominated by O.C.I.C. said: "There are several happy coincidences which link this beautiful country of Luxembourg with the prize film, which we are to see here this evening. The Luxembourg Society in London, of which I am proud to be a member, has its offices on the embankment of the River Thames and its windows look out upon a sailing ship that has been anchored there for many years. The name of this ship is "Discovery" the vessel in which Robert Falcon Scott made his first momentous journey to the Antarctic.

"Coming, as I do, from a country that has always been proud to boast of the courage and persistence in the cause of humanity of men like Robert Falcon Scott, it is but natural that I should express the admiration which people in Britain have for Luxembourg and its Grand Ducal Family as a result of their courageous persistence in the same cause during the last World War.

"In a world in which materialistic totalitarianism tends to grow ever larger and to engulf human rights and liberties, it is an inspiration to be presented with the story of a man like Scott who, against great odds and moved by the deepest spiritual convictions, was able, at the cost of his life, to contribute by his scientific discoveries as well as by his personal example so much that is for the good of humanity.

"To be able to present by means of the cinema, a film like *Scott of the Antarctic* is a great responsibility

and a great achievement. It is a great responsibility because it involves the impressions and ideas received by a vast audience all over the world. It is a great achievement because to make such a film—and to make it well—one needs to be endowed with something of the same vision and tenacity of purpose as the men depicted on the screen.

"It is for reasons such as these that Pius XI states, in his Encyclical Letter on the cinema, that films are both the most dangerous as well as among the most beneficial instruments that science has placed within our grasp today. It is as a result of the desire of Pius XI that the Church should do all in its power to promote good motion pictures that the *Office Catholique International du Cinema* (O.C.I.C.) has instituted the practice of offering a Special Diploma at the major film festivals, a Diploma dedicated to the film which most contributes to the moral and spiritual betterment of mankind.

"It will be understood by those who are familiar with the teachings of the Encyclical and the efforts of the O.C.I.C. that only films of the highest artistic value are considered good enough to be the vehicles of ethical and spiritual impressions such as the Church wishes to see encouraged.

"It will also be understood that the O.C.I.C. makes no narrow confessional interpretation of its terms of reference when awarding its Diploma. The best possible from whatever Christian source it may come. In the case of Robert Falcon Scott we have an example of one of the best types of English Protestant, a man of deep spirituality, with a character that is an inspiration and an encouragement to all.

"The film *Scott of the Antarctic* fulfils in an admirable way all that is regarded as most desirable by the O.C.I.C. Technically speaking it was a tour de force, and the adventures of the team that went to the Antarctic for the purposes of the exterior location work required in the film are not unworthy to mention in the same context as those of Scott himself. Over all the film moves the spirit of Robert Falcon Scott and it is a tribute alike to John Mills, who played the rôle, and to Charles Frend, who directed it, that, after

seeing the film, one experiences the conviction that one has lived with and known and loved the man himself.

"Of Charles Frend let me say this: he is representative of the best in a school of film production which, during the war and since, has made some of the finest British films ever known. The Ealing Studios has never been content with the tawdry or second-rate. Whether the subject has been comedy like *Hue and Cry* or *A Run For Your Money* or high drama like *San Demetrio*, *London*, the film has always betrayed the marks of a man and an organisation inspired by high ideals in the art and craft of cinema. It is only right that I should here mention Sir Michael Balcon, the Executive Producer of Ealing Studios, who has given to the world an almost unbroken succession of first-class and intelligent films, of which *Scott of the Antarctic* is by no means the last. We tender our grateful thanks to Sir Michael Balcon for making it possible for Charles Frend to be here tonight to receive our applause, and it is with the greatest pleasure that I hand to him the Special Diploma of the *Office Catholique International du Cinema* for his magnificent and beautiful film, *Scott of the Antarctic*."

In reply, Charles Frend said: "I am deeply conscious of the honour which you have accorded *Scott of the Antarctic* by the presentation of this Diploma, and on behalf of all of us who made the film I thank you.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction to me as Director because it shows that in one respect at least the film has succeeded in its purpose, that of emphasising the true importance of the Scott story. To superficial observers Scott might seem to have failed in two ways. He failed to get to the South Pole first and he failed to bring his party safely home. But the true importance of the story is not the race to the South Pole, important though it seemed to be at that time nor the fact that a Norwegian got there first instead of an Englishman. Nor is the vital point Scott's failure to return safely, despite his skill and experience as an explorer. Scott and his companions were not supermen—indeed they were very human and made many mistakes—but when they found themselves face to face with death, their characters stood the test: and this is the vitally important point of their story. Scott himself wrote in his diary: 'Things have come out against us. And, therefore, we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined to do our best to the last.' The fortitude of these men transcends national boundaries. We remember them not so much because they were Englishmen as because they added new dignity to the history of humanity."

The distinguished audience received the film with warm and enthusiastic applause and were evidently moved by its powerful impact.



FR. BURKE . . . CHARLES FREND

FILM AND STRIPS AS AIDS IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES AND AGENCIES

- Catholic Truth Society, 38/40 Eccleston Square, S.W.1.
 Religious Films Ltd., 6 Eaton Gate, S.W.1.
 Dawn Trust Ltd., Aylesbury, Bucks.
 Drummond Young, 8 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh.
 Visual Information Service, 168a Battersea Bridge Road, S.W.11.
 Dominican Picture Apostolate, Bloomsbury Publishing Co., 34 Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1.
 Apostolic Picture Network, Park Cottage, Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey.
 Editions Lumina, 5 Rue Ferou Paris, VIe.
 Editions du Berger, 4 Rue Cassette, Paris, VIe.
 Common Ground Ltd., Sydney Place, S.W.7.
 The Catholic Film Institute, 20 Ovington Square, S.W.3.

A. STORY FILMS FOR THE TEACHING OF DOCTRINE

Night Prayers: C.T.S. 2.

The Morning Offering: C.T.S. 5.

Sunday: C.T.S. 17.

The Gift of Faith: C.T.S. 25.

Hiring charges : 4/- per reel (except *Sunday* : 5/-).

Each of these short silent films uses to a greater or lesser degree, the story method of bringing home an important lesson in the way most readily assimilated by young people. The two first, with their small boy actors, will appeal on almost all counts, and older as well as younger boys and girls can enjoy the fun while learning to appreciate the importance of the spiritual life and the means given to us of keeping our lives in touch with the supernatural.

Sunday shows us a Catholic family and is an excellent practical lesson on the 1st Commandment of the Church, and brings out the happiness which

ought to be connected in the child's mind with God's day. The treatment of the eldest son, a typical adolescent, is rather unsympathetic, but juniors will enjoy it. The all but fatal accident to the small boy is attributed to the fact that his big brother has missed Mass, and the lack of connection between the two events will not escape the notice of critical youth.

The Gift of Faith, the story of a conversion is less convincing but it gives an interesting demonstration of the reception of a convert into the Church. It is a pity that the young convert is rather gloomy in appearance and dress, for the film does not give the impression that there is matter for rejoicing in the bestowal and reception of the gift of Faith.

B. SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND FILMS

The Synagogue

R.F.76. Religious Films Ltd. Sound. 2 reels. Hiring charges : 6s. per reel.

"2,000 Years Ago" is a group of films on the life of Palestine in the first century, and other titles include *The Home* and *The School*. The first reel is devoted to an excellent reconstruction of the synagogue, and is successful in giving fresh meaning and immediacy to New Testament descriptions of Christ's work. Yet it is quite objective in approach and no effort is made to create emotional atmosphere. Nor are Gospel characters introduced, but ordinary people are shown doing what Christ and His Apostles did. The second reel deals admirably with the Passover, and details of Our Lord's words and actions at the Last Supper become more meaningful as the solemn ritual is celebrated. This is an excellent film, and there is a lightness of touch about it which makes the actors seem very human and real people.

Suitable for older juniors and seniors.

Where Trod the Twelve

R.F.1012. 2 reels. Silent. Hiring charges: 3s. per reel. Religious Films Ltd.

This silent film is a successful attempt to "realise" the Gospel story by means of scenes from life as it was and is lived in the Holy Land. The countryside, houses, streets and market places "where trod the twelve" come alive. The trades of village carpenter and fisherman are shown and well known spots connected with Our Lord's life are included. The second part of the film is a commentary in pictures on Our Lord's teaching in discourse and parable. There are shots illustrating the meaning of "good measure pressed down", the beauty of the "lilies of the field", and the parable of the Good Samaritan becomes an exciting drama. The film closes with views of the scenes of Our Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection. This film can be recommended for all ages from about 10 upwards.

Simon Peter, Fisherman

Dawn Trust, D.C.F.20. Hire: Sound £1 5s.; Silent 17s. Time: 32 minutes.

This Dawn Trust film gives an unusual view of the figure of St. Peter. Here we see him before and immediately after Our Lord has called him. He is seen as strong, patient, tender and gracious, and these qualities are exhibited in his treatment of his young wife, who is dismayed and distressed by the change she notes in him after he has met the Master. She is clinging and affectionate and does not want to see their family life disturbed. Simon Peter has to be firm, almost severe, in renouncing home life and finally departing in the Master's company.

Naturally, in a film devoted to a disciple, Our Lord appears comparatively little. He is seen with the crowds and with the few He is about to choose as His own, and at the bedside of the sick. He is reverently depicted, austere and detached yet obviously winning strong men to leave all for the sake of His company.

The scenes of home life and countryside are excellent; the costumes are good and the characters on the whole simple and natural in movement and manner. The only exception is

Simon's wife, who in appearance and behaviour is more dramatic than her prototype was likely to be. Of St. Peter the criticism might be made that a more mature and sophisticated character is presented to us than that of the disciple of the Gospel.

St. Paul's Years of Apprenticeship

Dawn Trust, D.C.F.22. Hiring charges as for *Simon Peter, Fisherman*.

This is the second of a group on the life of St. Paul, of which the first deals with the conversion. In this film Paul's brief sojourn at Damascus, his unsuccessful attempts to win over his former allies to his new faith, and his departure to the wilderness for prayer and solitude are related against a background of sufficiently realistic scenery.

If the character of the fisherman Peter has been rendered too complicated and modern in the film devoted to him, the tendency here seems to be to over-simplify the brilliant but difficult character of Saul. On the whole the film fulfils well its claim to adhere closely to the Bible story, though the interpretation of some of the minor characters does not always ring true. But it is a reverent and interesting film, and has had success in use by Army chaplains during and since the war. Its appeal, therefore, would probably be to the older pupils in Secondary Schools.

C. TWO STRIPS ON THE MASS

The Sacred Actions

By Fr. Hubert McEvoy. Pictures by Drummond Young. (Accompanying book is published by Oliver and Boyd.) Price: £1 1s. May be obtained from The Catholic Film Institute.

This strip accompanies the author's Mass Book for children, and is an adaptation and simplification of the film *The Sacrifice We Offer*, and the book of the same title. The latter are probably known to most of our readers, and the present strip is found most useful as the basis of a series of lessons to study and explain the actions of the Mass step by step. Close-up photographs of priest and server are excellent and full of reverence, and show exactly what is happening at any stage in the progress of the Mass. To help young

people to concentrate effectively, Father McEvoy divides the Mass into short time sequences; at the beginning of each important stage we are told how many minutes we have for, e.g., preparation for sacrifice, or for thanking God. The strip can perfectly well be used independently of the book, but if the teacher, at least, has a copy of the text she will be greatly aided in building up appropriate instruction and in enriching for the children the significance of the pictures; the book, however, is designed to be the personal property of the individual child for use at home for quiet reading, and at Mass in lieu of a child's Missal. The strip could be used with older juniors, and both strip and book would also be appreciated by senior pupils.

The Mass for Little Children

By S. N. D. V.I.S.2259. 20 frames.
Price: 7s. 6d. from the Catholic Film Institute.

This is a carefully planned teaching strip in which the doctrine of the Christian Sacrifice is clearly yet simply worked out. It consists of 8 pictures linked by explanations, with prayers and verses designed to fix in memory the main points to be remembered. Our Lord's wonderful deeds, His miracles, are exemplified in the changing of water into wine at Cana, and in the feeding of the 5,000. These in turn typify the great Miracle of the Last Supper, when Our Lord changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood, and told His apostles to do the same. On Calvary Our Lord is shown offered in Sacrifice, and the remaining pictures relate the Mass to Christ's oblation and to our own offering of self with Him to God. This should be a very useful strip for the teacher of infants and young juniors, and in experienced hands would lend itself to various methods of use.

D. OTHER CATHOLIC FILM STRIPS

Bishop Challoner

Catholic Truth Society. 2 reels. Hiring Charges: 2/6; price 10/-.

A knowledge of the Catholic past and of England's fight for the Faith so often stops short at the more spectacular period covered by Monsignor Benson's books, that any attempt to familiarise

Catholics with the work of an English Bishop to whom we owe so much is to be welcomed. The strip is the work of a real historian, and an expert on the period. Much of it is composed of contemporary prints and of reproductions of original documents and title-pages of the various works published by Bishop Challoner. The notes which accompany the strip are more than usually necessary to explain the pictures, and the utility and interest of the film would be much enhanced by being handled by someone thoroughly versed in the subject. The type of illustration used and in fact the general mode of treatment is not really adapted to younger children, who cannot assimilate a mass of pictorial detail, but it would be useful for boys and girls of 14 and over, as well as for adult groups.

Good Tidings of Great Joy

Dominican Picture Apostolate. 24 frames. Colour. Price: 12s. 6d.

This strip, described as a first venture, is produced by the Picture Apostolate, whose books and picture publications must be well known to Catholic teachers. It is planned as a forerunner to a complete series of strips to cover the matter contained in their series of Outline Books. The strip deals with the childhood of Our Lord in a series of brightly, but on the whole, not too crudely, coloured pictures. The first frame is an attractive "picture map" representing the scenes of the Gospel by appropriate small groups placed upon a map of the near East. The remaining pictures take through the story from the vision of Zachary to the return to Nazareth after the Finding in the Temple. The gospel reference is given for each picture. The scenes and figures are adapted to the child mind, being simple and homely and of the type to evoke questions; little children would probably enjoy telling the stories of the pictures to each other in class. In a few instances something of desirable dignity has been sacrificed, and in one or two cases Our Lord's features are weak and childish without being childlike. The strip is very well planned, and would provide matter for a series of lessons. It errs, possibly, in trying to fit in too much, and perhaps the inclusion of St. John the Baptist's story may be a bit confusing

for the age group for which it is intended.

St. Mary's Farm

Apostolic Picture Network. 40 frames.
Price: 6s. 6d.

This strip produced for the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society by the Apostolic Picture Network, tells something of an interesting venture in land training undertaken by the Society in an effort to solve the problem of vocational training for the boys under their care. The life and work of the farm are shown in excellent photographs (those of the animals are outstanding in quality) of stages in the day's toil—not omitting the other aspects of life at St. Mary's, where the boys' spiritual welfare and their comfort and happiness are also matters of importance to those in charge. The film's primary purpose is to demonstrate the Church in Action with the S.C.R.S. doing on behalf of us the corporal works of mercy. The conclusion is that such a work deserves

FOCUS wishes
all its friends
and contributors
a joyful. Easter

our interest and practical support. Apart from this main purpose, the strip could well be used to arouse interest in and knowledge of farming as a satisfying way of life.

ERRATA: G.B.E. Silent Films.
Hiring charge: 5/6, not 4/6 as stated in last issue.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 2 and 3)

<i>A Handful of Rice</i>	(C)	(41)
<i>A Kiss for Corliss</i>	(B)	(78)
<i>Angel With the Trumpet</i>	(A)	(81)
<i>A Stranger Walked In</i>	(A)	(47)
<i>Bicycle Thieves</i>	(B)	(48)
<i>Boys in Brown</i>	(B)	(80)
<i>Buccaneer's Girl</i>	(B)	(85)
<i>Copper Canyon</i>	(C)	(75)
<i>Cure for Love, The</i>	(A)	(42)
<i>Doctor and the Girl, The</i>	(A)	(40)
<i>Francis</i>	(B)	(79)
<i>Golden Salamander</i>	(C)	(76)
<i>Holiday Affair</i>	(C)	(46)
<i>Il Miraculo</i>	(A)	(73)
<i>It Concerns Us All</i>	(B)	(41)
<i>It's a Great Feeling.</i>	(B)	(85)
<i>Jolson Sings Again</i>	(B)	(46)
<i>Le Roi</i>	(A)	(78)

<i>Madeleine</i>	(A)	(82)
<i>Miss Pilgrim's Progress</i>	(C)	(78)
<i>Neptune's Daughter</i>		(74)
<i>No Place for Jennifer</i>	(A)	(84)
<i>Not Wanted</i>	(A)	(79)
<i>Paid in Full</i>	(A)	(40)
<i>Rocking Horse Winner, The</i>	(B)	(44)
<i>Rugged O'Riordans, The</i>	(B)	(74)
<i>Sand</i>	(B)	(43)
<i>Story of a Ring, The</i>	(C)	(46)
<i>Tarzan's Magic Fountain</i>	(B)	(45)
<i>Task Force</i>	(B)	(45)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B)	(73)
<i>Woman in Hiding</i>	(B)	(75)
<i>You're My Everything</i>	(C)	(46)
<i>Your Witness</i>	(B)	(86)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Come to the Stable</i>	(C)	(12)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A)	(42)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C)	(150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B)	(70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B)	(14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A)	(159)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B)	(80)
<i>The Search</i>	(B)	(342)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B)	(220)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Your Witness

Sir,

I notice that your reviewer writes: "Patricia Wayne, whose first film this is . . . etc." This statement is not strictly correct. It is true that it is the first film in which Miss Wayne has performed under that name but, as Patricia Cutts (she is, I believe, a daughter of pioneer British film Director Graham Cutts), she has, to my knowledge, played in one other film—and there may be others. Moreover, she has a background of about 2½ years of repertory theatre experience.

I recently saw the film I have just mentioned—a British "second Feature" entitled *The Adventures of P.C. 49* (based on one of the episodes broadcast by the B.B.C.)—in which Miss Cutts was aptly cast as Archie's fiancée, Joan Carr. I would wish it were possible for "V." to see it, because I feel that he would then be prepared to state that not only is Miss Wayne "vivacious and pretty", but can, *when given the opportunity*, act.

Reverting to "V.'s" review of *Your Witness*, in particular the final paragraph, I venture to disagree with his opinion that Robert Montgomery "is much too much in the picture". How could he avoid being much in this picture when the central theme of the film's story revolves around Adam's anxious endeavours on behalf of the man who had saved his life? I, personally, find Bob Montgomery's acting so polished and entertaining that I do not easily tire of his presence on the screen.

Yours,

L. COUDURIER.

108 Bessborough Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex.

Greatly Surprised

Sir,

I read your March Editorial (on *The Miracle*) with great interest, but your attitude to the film in question greatly surprised me. Many responsible critics have reviewed this film and saw in it

none of the vicious implications which you have detected in it, and I seem to remember that in a recent edition of the B.B.C.'s feature, "The Critics," C. A. Lejeune, who is surely in the forefront as far as taste and critical perception are concerned, declared that she found *The Miracle* a beautiful and moving experience.

Religion is a powerful force in human beings, and is not a study of its chance effect on a simple-minded peasant quite justifiable, especially as in this case it is generally agreed that the treatment of the story is adult and artistic? This film is not likely to excite as much derision amongst audiences as did some of the American films about "religious" subjects, films which were usually childish and sometimes downright silly. Any such films, however, do less harm than the spate of sickeningly cruel and unnecessarily coarse films to which we are now subjected and which you would do far better to criticise with the utmost severity.

Yours,

HAROLD GERRY.

"Cliff-View",
East Church Street,
Buckie,
Scotland.

Constructive Criticism

Sir,

You have asked for constructive criticism. I hope you are snowed under with it, because it would prove the amount of interest taken in *FOCUS* and the C.F.I.

The contents of *FOCUS* being of a high standard demand a magazine more professional in make-up than it is at present. Although more money would be expended in producing such a magazine, the increase would be compensated by the increase in its circulation and influence.

A potential reader judges from his first impression, therefore the appearance should always receive great attention. The size of the magazine should be reduced by one inch to the more square shape of, for example,

"Readers Digest", and the present colour scheme entirely changed. The first issues of this year had very unattractively dull covers. In fact a new design should be considered, unless a new choice of brighter colours proves in itself sufficient.

And now to the lay-out of the contents. The advertisements dispel rather than compel because little or no use is made of design or illustration, they are just arrangements of words (often too many). Many of the titles need more boldness than they enjoy at present. Some by way of variety could be improved by a sketch or an illustration, or a designed block in the case of some regular features. Typographical experts could possibly suggest a happier choice of type; sometimes very small at other times so well spaced out that one gains an impression of spreading out to fill space.

As for the material published, it is the duty of all Catholics in the cinema and "lay" world to contribute articles of a suitable nature in order to ensure at all times an extremely high standard by virtue of a healthy competitive spirit.

I hope this letter causes neither dismay among the gallant team of people responsible for publishing *Focus* nor a crop of well-wishers to denounce my "lack of appreciation", but rather to stimulate ideas and—above all—action among both the publishers and readers towards producing a copy of *Focus* which will compel people to demand it! Even poor material, when well-dressed will attract, far more so will good material well-dressed. *Focus* has good material—it has a duty to present it attractively.

Yours,

W. D. APPLEBY.

York.

(All very true and constructive. We must see what we can do about it.—Ed.)

Covering "Focus"

Sir,

It is sad to think that our cover, designed by one of the best-known West End advertising artists, should remind your correspondent of a parish magazine. Personally I have never come across so enterprising a parochial journal. However, if there is an outcry against the cover we could do something about it. In the meantime, let us hope that people interested in films are a

little more adventurous and get as far as turning the pages.

Yours,

J. A. V. BURKE.

Art for Out

Sir,

With the guilt of only comparative legibility on me I must pass in the notice of the film "*Madeleine*", the description of Miss Todd as "fly" instead of "fey". But I must offer to correct the printed statement that Miss Sellers "gives a performance that marks her *art* (instead of *out*) for promotion". Your readers might imagine that the notice was dictated. That I should not like very much.

Yours,

X.

Sir,

I would like to bring to your notice a slight inaccuracy which appeared in the March issue of *Focus* and which you must have overlooked; I mean the first paragraph of the review by "V" of the film *No Place for Jennifer*. "V" says: "... the words first uttered by an angel: 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb' ". As far as I know (and which I have now confirmed through "The Students' Catholic Doctrine" by Rev. Charles Hart, B.A.), the words "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb" were spoken by Our Lady's cousin, St. Elizabeth.

Please excuse me for interfering with your work, but I could not let the above pass without notifying you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for the really splendid work you and your team of reviewers are doing. You do not know how eagerly I look forward to receiving your monthly review; perhaps it may be possible that, in the not too distant future, we might start getting it fortnightly. I have all the copies of *Focus* since the first issue and always consult them before I go to see a film. May God continue to guide and help you in your noble work so that you may, in return, guide and help us in the selection of the correct film.

Yours,

JOHN ELLUL.

Hamrun,
Malta.

(Thank you for "being such an observant and devoted reader. You are quite right.—Ed.)

INSTITUTE NOTES

Film Competition

The C.F.I. Film Competition is now open. *16mm. films, sound or silent, on any subject, any (reasonable!) length. Entries to be sent in not later than September 30th, 1950. Each film should be accompanied by an entrance fee of 10s. The Catholic Film Institute reserves the right to exhibit the prize-winning and any other films submitted in any way considered necessary.

Film Show

By the time these lines are being read we shall have had the first of what we hope will be a series of film shows for members of the C.F.I. designed to bring members together in friendly contact as well as to provide an opportunity to see worthwhile films of classic reputation.

On Passion Sunday, March 26th, we are showing Dreyer's *Passion of Jeanne D'Arc*. The Challoner Club, London, which will be the venue of our meeting, is not very large; the success of this first show will dictate whether a larger room need be considered. It is clear that only members in the London area will be able to come, but there is no reason why members in other districts should not emulate our example. Our plea for Regional Organisation of the C.F.I. still remains to be implemented.

Film Course

We hope that many of you are making use of Andrew Buchanan's Film Course as a stimulant to Catholic Film Action. Many people ask us what does the C.F.I. *do*? The tone in which the question is put often suggests that it is imagined either that our activities are restricted to free cinema shows on Press Day, or that there is nothing we can do to alter the course of cinema history.

The answer to the question really implies a consideration of *what we can induce you to do*. If only a comparatively small section of the

community were trained to know what makes a good film and how it can be secured, our time would not have been wasted. All beneficial legislation and reform is the result of a few people with vision and drive who knew what they wanted. Twelve men once overcame and impregnated a monster far larger than the Cinema Empire. They had the help of the grace of God as well as a vocation. We claim that nothing short of a sense of vocation, both in the making and using of films, is required in order that, ultimately, the cinema, the most powerful of all propaganda media, be harnessed in the cause of Christianity.

Summer School

It has been a difficult task trying to find accommodation for our Summer School. As past experience seems to insist that a Residential School is desirable our efforts have been to that extent restricted. We have now succeeded in securing accommodation at the Convent of the Assumption, Ramsgate, which, with the co-operation of a neighbouring Prep. School, will be able to provide for the needs of about 50 students. The only material difference to be noted is that the date for the Film Summer School is now August 8th-12th inclusive.

We had hoped to have prices and tariff details ready before going to press with this issue, but all members will be circularised as soon as possible, and we hope for loyal support this time to help us do our best to give you what you want.

The Course will be delivered by well-known personalities and will have both a theoretical as well as a practical side.

Please make your initial reservations as soon as possible.

Holy Year Film Pilgrimage

At the Executive Committee of O.C.I.C. at Luxembourg, plans were announced for the Holy Year Catholic Film Pilgrimage. It is to take the form

of an international congress of Catholic members of the cinema industry. At the request of the Holy Father it will not be restricted to Catholics, but is open to any well-intentioned person who regards his part in the film world as in some sense a vocation.

An interesting programme is being arranged and it is hoped that the Holy Father will make a special pronouncement on the cinema.

The Congress-Pilgrimage is being arranged by O.C.I.C., but each national film centre is asked to organise a delegation from its own country. We hope that members of the industry, from whatever department, will consider the possibility of joining us so as to provide a really representative British delegation. All details in the first case to be had from the Secretary, Congress-Pilgrimage, 20 Ovington Square, S.W.3.

The dates of the Congress-Pilgrimage are May 26th, 27th, 28th. The Place, ROME.

Film Lectures

Lectures have recently been given by the Hon. Secretary as follows: Italian Films, to the Italian Club, Oxford; The

Cinema and Parental Responsibility, to the County School Parents' and Teachers' Association, Tunbridge Wells; Introducing Catholic Film Action (together with a film show) at Beckenham; The Moral Aspects of Some Recent Films, to the Digby Stuart College, Roehampton, and the introductory Conference to a Course of Film Appreciation, which the C.F.I. is organising for the Southern Region of the Association of Convent Schools.

We are glad to do what we can to help in this and other ways to propagate the Catholic viewpoint on films. In the London District expenses are negligible, but journeys outside that area involve expense and, if it is necessary to be away for a night, the question of a priest supply becomes necessary. We have no subsidy of any kind and the sole source of income is that derived from our members and friends and the sale of FOCUS and the commission on film rentals. This does not allow honoraria to be paid to our lecturers. If, therefore, intending organisers will bear this fact in mind, it will make things easier in many ways.

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COVER PERSONALITY

BEATRICE CAMPBELL

About two years ago came a letter to our office expressing the wish that we should publish a photograph of an actress called Beatrice Campbell. The letter as well as the lady came from Belfast but the connection was purely coincidental. The writer was but one of many devoted admirers of a talented actress whom we in poor benighted England, as yet knew only as a name in film publicity lists as a "discovery". When, a few months ago, I had the pleasure of meeting Beatrice Campbell, I was able to number myself among her admirers and even to join the number of those who levelled threats at the head of the Editor unless he consented to publish her picture.

You see, in the meantime I had been following her career in British films and realised that here we had a potential star of considerable magnitude. Like many another successful actress, Beatrice Campbell had early ambitions on the stage. At the age of four she was taught by her lawyer father how to address a jury in a murder trial! That was when she decided she wanted to be able to sway people's emotions the way lawyers and actors do! She has played in many plays and films since then, but she regards herself as still a student of her art, and her ambition now is to act as well as Bette Davis, her favourite film star. It would be insincere to say that she already acts as well as her model, but at least one can say that she has the same determination and the same talent and that experience will do the rest.

Beatrice Campbell has definite views about most things, including the state of the British film industry at the present time. It would not be discreet to repeat all that she thinks, but it is instructive to notice that she considers that the principal artistic weakness of the native industry is its failure to study its budding actresses. Too much

publicity and too little experience makes for bad film performances. Too much tendency to stereotype make-up and appearance; too little study by cameramen of the peculiarities of physiognomy and lighting requirements of individual actresses: these are some of the points about which Beatrice Campbell has decided views and will talk long and intelligently.

Her most recent pictures have been *No Place for Jennifer* and *Now Barabbas*. In the latter she gave a fine performance as the girl who came to break off her engagement with her imprisoned fiancé. It stood out even with such competition as that of Kathleen Harrison. Her study of the hard, ambitious, selfish wife and mother in *No Place for Jennifer* was a considerable success, but the story suffered from poverty of script and development: nevertheless it was clear that Beatrice Campbell, given the right material and under the right direction, could reach great heights.

Her first film was *Wanted For Murder*, with Eric Portman in 1945. She played the part of a slatternly girl with such conviction that her next three rôles were similar; in *Meet Me At Dawn*, *Odd Man Out* (though her part was also out when the film was released!) and *Ghosts of Berkeley Square*. This latter film was an amusing affair with Felix Aylmer and Robert Morley, which has had far less than its due meed of success. Other films featuring Beatrice Campbell have been *The Hangman Waits*, *Things Happen at Night*, *My Brother Jonathan* and *Silent Dust*. She is next to be seen starring with Alec Guinness in J. B. Priestley's screen story *Last Holiday*.

Ten films in four years is good going and we look forward to many more and many better films worthy of a talented actress.

JOHN VINCENT.

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National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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AIMS AND OBJECTS

1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

MAY 1950

No. 5

Quotation

The other day I was talking to a priest about the Importance and Necessity of a Catholic Film Institute. He listened, kindly and courteously, and pulled from the bottom drawer of his desk a comfortable looking "common place" book, ripped a page from it, handed it to me, as he said: "This might interest some of your readers". It was an extract from an article on "The Faith and the Cinema", which Mr. McDonald had written for "The Month" in December, 1922. Here it is . . .

The external structure of the Church is based upon the principle that is applied in the Cinema. A means of instruction that has only been appreciated by psychologists and advertisers in recent years has been utilised persistently throughout the history of the Church, which, recognising that man is not as a rule capable of purely abstract thought, has been careful to provide him with images and symbols that bring home to him the great truths of his religion. For the mind loves pictures and will assimilate illustrated truth with remarkable ease . . . Why not, then, a Film Evidence Guild? The means to be employed have been indicated at least in part by Mr. Belloc, who is

a stout champion of the Cinema. He advocates for the purposes of secular education, the production of a number of short films which would show developments in constitutional government, architecture and the general life of the people. One, for instance, might show London Bridge at various periods of its history, another the form of government in this country throughout the centuries. A third (and this is more to our purpose) might show pictures of worship in St. Paul's.

1.—The sacrifices that took place on the site of St. Paul's in pagan times.

2.—Pictures of the Mass in early Christian days and before the Reformation.

3.—Illustrations of a modern service (as a contrast).

That such a film would be an admirable lesson in apologetics is certain and the use of judicious subtitles would help to make it conclusive, if it were supplemented by a short historical picture showing why a radical difference exists between the pre-Reformation and the post-Reformation act of worship.

("Month", Dec. 1922, McDonald)

THE PATIENT NEEDS A BLOOD TRANSFUSION

[Lyn Lockwood, the author of this topical and interesting article, is a film script-writer. He and Bernard McNabb created the script for the film : *It's Not Cricket*]

The crisis which descended with startling suddenness upon the British film industry a year ago has now reached its peak.

At the moment of writing, the large Denham and Pinewood studios, for the first time since they came under the control of J. Arthur Rank, have not a single picture in production between them. Furthermore, the Film Finance Corporation, brought into being to help the independent producer, has exhausted its funds without noticeably improving the situation and without being able to look forward to a profit on the majority of its various investments.

This very unhealthy state of affairs cannot be attributed entirely to complicated financial set-ups or production extravagances. While it is true that a large amount of money has been lost chasing the American will-o'-the-wisp market with expensive prestige pictures, it is unfortunately equally true that a good deal of money has been lost, and is now being lost, on economical films designed primarily for the home market—films which should, with average success, have shown a profit.

It is this slumping average return from box offices all over the country that is in the main responsible for the present production stagnation and that has led to the demand for a remission of entertainment-tax to the producer.

Two years ago, when the industry was expanding to meet the 40 per cent quota, the film designed for the home market was being produced on a budget round about £100,000. So marked, how-

ever, has been the downward spiral of receipts that producers are now trying to make pictures of international class on the same figure of £100,000, while more modest productions are being budgeted at £60,000.

This decline in returns from the cinema means only one thing—lack of interest on the part of the public. And here we approach the core of the present problem.

An industry, in order to survive, has to maintain a continual flow of new blood, new ideas and fresh experiments. This is particularly true where the commodity being produced is entertainment, but on examination we find that the British film industry is, of all industries, the least inclined to experiment with new ideas and new blood.

It is a regrettable fact that anybody with ambitions for a film career has to overcome, in this country, a slough of apathy that would daunt anyone without the constitution of a rhinoceros. Occasionally a new star is born—but only very occasionally and then probably by accident.

In the last five years the British studios have produced one young woman with genuine star qualities in Jean Simmons. There are, of course, a number of starlets, but these, though they are able to look decorative at the bedside of that very sick man, the British film industry, are hardly likely to revive the patient.

In the same period three star men have been launched on film careers—Richard Todd, Michael Denison and Trevor Howard. In fact, since produc-

tion started expanding with the return to peace, our two biggest organisations have between them managed to produce only four star personalities capable of attracting people to the cinema. This is a staggeringly bad record. Of the rest of the small handful of big star names, some started their careers during the war years, but the majority commenced more years ago than they care, I imagine, to remember.

Where directors are concerned it is the same story—a small handful of top-flight men and none of recent development. As for screenwriters, their struggle for recognition is probably the hardest task of all.

Here is the root cause of the plight of our studios. They have been trying to do too much with too little. The industry, in fact, is suffering from a famine.

Even with the present reduced quota of 30 per cent we have to find fifty films a year to satisfy the requirements of the three big circuits. With the

material at their disposal our producers are hard put to turn out entertaining and interesting pictures to the extent of half that number.

If British films survive the current crisis, there must be a whole-hearted attempt on the part of our producers to go and find new talent—whether it is acting, directing or writing—and, having found it, to encourage it with all the means at their disposal.

The unlimited supply of new personalities is not confined to America, where the producers, though disturbed by periodical slumps, are not faced with major crises because they realise that their success depends on the ability to keep their studios provided with a constant flow of new material.

British producers must adopt the same attitude of mind, or they will eventually succumb once and for all.

The patient needs a transfusion urgently—and a financial transfusion is not the answer.

LYN LOCKWOOD.

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IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

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FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 4—THE CINEMA PROGRAMME

More than *twenty-eight million* people go to the cinema regularly every week in this country, and the majority are well below middle-age. I advise students to debate whether this is a good, bad, or harmless habit, remembering that, as a general rule, the cinema does not offer cultural entertainment. The majority of commercial films tend to create a sense of wrong values, and there is evidence of their influence in almost every walk of life. Perhaps it can be summed up as a **concentration on superficialities, and an ignoring of fundamentals—the making-up of the face being regarded as of far greater importance than the making-up of the mind.** The influence of film on the fair sex is hypnotic, and has resulted in a stereotyped appearance—hair, lips, eyes, scarves, shoes, manicure—all shaped on star lines—surface-sophistication having reached every village within reach of cinemas. On the young male population a similar kind of influence is apparent, frequently undesirable—an influence which goes deeper than the wearing of terrifying ties, and suits cut to fit apes. There have been, and always will be, debates as to the extent to which the cinema is responsible for juvenile delinquency, and the present vogue in gangsterism. Sometimes, the cinema emerges blameless, and all kinds of alternative reasons are given as the causes for crimes and immorality, but the arguments are not conclusive, and I suggest students should thrash out this question, for it is a fundamental one of the very greatest importance.

There is no doubt, of course, that the exciting mixture of glitter, glamour, girls, and guns creates mental restless-

ness and over-stimulated emotions, and offers an alluring alternative to life in drab overcrowded homes. **There is also no doubt that the spiritual and mental development of the individual is not advanced by film-going.**

Unlike theatrogoers, filmgoers are usually not selective. They go to see the pictures, and not to see a picture. It is true, however, that news of a poor film spreads through a locality like a forest fire, and attendances drop, but this does not often occur. Incidentally, what is regarded as a "poor" film by many film-fans is frequently a particularly fine production, but lacking the usual entertaining ingredients. The great "prestige" films, the few and far between religious films, and the cream of the Italian and French productions do not usually secure wide release because distributors know they would not be successful. Why? Because filmgoers have been brought up on productions shaped on a formula which is a certain money-spinner. **The inspiring, thought-provoking, imaginative, poetic kind of film just has no place.**

Older students will remember the single-feature programme—one long film supported by several short ones, which was superseded some years ago by the double-feature programme, now the vogue in all but about 300 of Britain's 4,700 cinemas. This drastic change was not the result of public demand, but of the industry itself. The public has little or no influence over distributors or producers. Now, the double-feature programme is very popular. People get a lot for their money. Their powers of endurance are

astonishing—to sit through and enjoy three hours' entertainment without a pause.

Is this too long? Would a single feature and a number of contrasting and informative short films form a better programme? It is interesting to note that by instituting the double-feature show the industry has, in some ways, cut its own throat, for it involves too great a strain on studios, and a shortage of worth-while films is inevitable. In this country the shortage is with us now.

Lastly, I suggest students trace the main reasons for cinema-going, and the factors which most influence people to

see this or that film. Remember, cinema-going is now a habit. It has long ceased to be a "treat". The majority are drawn by the stars, and not by the stories in which they appear. Few people care who write film stories. Reviewers' opinions in the national press influence about 20 per cent of filmgoers—the popular write-ups and not the intellectual analyses, being closely followed.

The biggest problem facing all who have the welfare of humanity at heart, and who realise the tremendous possibilities offered by film, is, how can the intellectual and moral level of the cinema programme be raised?

"PASSION DE JEHANNE D'ARC"

On Passion Sunday, at the Challoner Club, the Catholic Film Institute put on the Danish director, Carl Dreyer's *Passion de Jehanne D'Arc*, a masterpiece with which to launch the Institute on the second stage of its two-fold mission. Like other organs of Catholic Film Action, the Catholic Film Institute must fulfil a dual function. First it must foster positive Catholic film production, although in this country the numerical and financial poverty of the Catholic population has restricted this to more or less parochial scope. The second and longer-term objective is to rouse Catholic opinion into film-consciousness, into recognition of the enormous resources of the cinema for good or evil as Fr. Hilary Carpenter emphasised after the show on Sunday. Too many of us are busy seeing only the evil in the cinema and leaving it at that. (Though those who use it to exploit moral corruption or dangerous political propaganda do not leave it.)

Catholics, trained as we are to distinguish between the man and his office, the sinner and his sin, should surely show a nicer discrimination than we often do between the cinema as a medium and its abuse in practice. The Catholic Film Institute could hardly have chosen a better example than Dreyer's *Passion de Jehanne D'Arc* to illustrate the cinema's capacity for

treating a noble, indeed a sacred theme on the highest level.

The technique of elaborate use of close-up, the photography of unmade-up faces against light backgrounds, was revolutionary twenty years ago. It came still as a revelation to the many who had never seen this film before, and comfortably stands comparison with the same director's more recent *Day of Wrath*. *La Passion de Jehanne D'Arc* is as powerful today as when it was made not only because of Dreyer's extraordinary use of the camera, but also because of Mme Falconetti's extraordinary performance without any of the accepted external assistance of make-up. But on Sunday the film was above all significant as an illustration of the cinema's power to treat a noble theme nobly, to treat it not in the terms of the novelette or the child's coloured history primer or even of the drama, but in terms of motion picture which challenge comparison with the great masters of painting.

If the Catholic Film Institute can discover more such connoisseur's pieces to show its members it will greatly speed up the work of enlightening those Catholic intellectuals who dismiss the whole cinema with scorn from a vantage point of either intellectual or moral complacency.

FREDA BRUCE LOCKHART.

Are Film Critics Really Necessary?

[Gabriel Fallon—actor and producer, Abbey Theatre, Dublin; actor, script writer, guest producer, Radio Eireann; foundation member, National Film Institute, Ireland; foundation member and past president, Catholic Stage Guild, Ireland; drama critic "The Standard"; contributor on film and drama to Irish and American periodicals—convinces us that film critics are really necessary]

What a question! Let's see what a few more questions will do to it. Are drama critics really necessary? Are art critics really necessary? Are critics really necessary? What is a film critic anyway? Surely one of that vast audience of film-goers thronging the world, who is privileged (if privileged is the word) to think aloud about the cinema.

Should we *think* about the cinema? Do *you* think about it? Or are you a member of one of those two great groups who wrap up thought in such blankets as "The Cinema is all wrong; away with it" or "The Cinema is all right; leave it alone". Well, if you're not; if you happen to be one who habitually does a spot of thinking about the Cinema you have probably arrived at the point of concluding that there is a *right* Cinema and a *wrong* Cinema. In other words you have begun to be a film critic. So much the better for the Cinema.

THINK AND TALK

Believe it or not, the Cinema needs *millions* of film critics; millions of people who will *think* about the Cinema, who will *talk* about the Cinema; in other words, millions of people who will refuse to take the Cinema lying down. Of course it doesn't follow from this that you should grow a beard, wear corduroy pants, and talk all *montage*. There's nothing to prevent you from doing that if you want to; indeed you might be doing worse in this mad world of ours. No.

in the beginning you needn't do anything more than say: "I liked this; I didn't like that". And, mark you, that's criticism. Don't be afraid of your opinions, and don't be ashamed of them. And go on thinking about the Cinema.

After a while you'll find yourself saying: "I liked this, because, etc." and "I didn't like that, because, etc." Now you're going places. So keep on talking. Don't be afraid to talk. Bore people about the Cinema. That will make them talk back about it. And then you've got them thinking. Don't be ashamed to talk about the Cinema. Think of all you've endured at the tongues of golf and bridge fiends. And consider this. *You can't afford expensive hobbies. But it costs nothing to talk about the cheap ones. So talk about yours.*

SAY IT OUT LOUD

Where is all this leading to, you may ask. And the answer is: it's leading to millions of film critics. So what? Well, listen to what those who know have to say. First of all Mr. Gilbert Seldes, author of "Movies for the Million".

"I should like it very much if you, the readers of this book, would occasionally get very angry with the producers of moving pictures, because *you, and millions of men and women like you, have spent millions of pounds on the movies.*"

And now the distinguished film critic, C. A. Lejeune:

"The exhibitor is just like any other sort of salesman—he stocks his shop with the goods that seem most likely to appeal to the majority of his customers, and then waits for further orders. So don't blame him if he doesn't show exactly the films you want to see. Don't just drift along putting up with films you know to be bad. Make a point of finding out the quality of various brands of films, just as you find out the quality of different brands of stockings or groceries, or typewriters. Learn to know which films are the most reliable. Then place your order with the exhibitor. Tell him exactly what films you want to see. Remember that the box-office controls the studio all the time, and you—not the critics—not the exhibitors, but *you*—control the box-office."

Well there it is for you. *You* control the box-office. You pay the piper. Should you refuse to call the tune? Think of the many times you exchanged your hard-earned money for an admission ticket only to shuffle home two hours later thinking: "That was pretty rotten bilge, anyway". Well, from now on, say it out loud. Tell your neighbour; tap at the Manager's Office on the way out and kindly inform him; get your pals to do likewise. That's what C. A. Lejeune wants you to do, to start becoming film-critics. Why not do more? Why not drop a line to the local news-sheet, telling all and sundry about the type of programme we happen to be getting down our way? Your action will very likely encourage others to do likewise. At all events you will have made other Cinema-goers think; you will be training potential film critics.

THE PRIMAL FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

Read all the film criticism you can lay your hands on. You will find, after all, that these good people, people like Dilys Powell, C. A. Lejeune and the film-critics of Focus, are simply cinemagoers like yourself trying to talk to you about the Cinema. Listen



Gabriel Fallon with Eileen Herlie

to them. But have your own views. Don't let them do your thinking for you. I'm pretty certain they don't want to. **They just want to make you think—for yourself. That is, or ought to be, the primal function of criticism.**

Ah, yes, film critics are really necessary. They are necessary to help us to sift the right Cinema from the wrong Cinema, necessary to make us behave intelligently about the Cinema, to keep us from turning into sheep. They are necessary to protect us from ourselves and from those who wax fat on our sheepishness. They are necessary to protect us from cranks, money-grubbing cranks, aesthetic cranks, even moral cranks. They are necessary to sustain us in being Cinemaddicts and to restrain us from becoming Cinemaniacs. And the more

there are of them the safer we'll feel. That is why so many professional film critics, at least once in a lifetime, write articles crying out for millions of colleagues.

We are living in an age in which many of us are compelled to turn to the Cinema in order that (as someone has so well put it) "the heart may be enabled to go on". This may indeed be a tragic comment on our civilisation, but it will not serve us to turn our backs upon it. Those of us who can find relaxation in books, in the theatre, in art, those of us to whom it has been given to dwell in comfortable surroundings would do well to consider how readily the tired machine-minder, the frustrated apprentice, the dejected out-of-work, the harassed mother, the lonely slum child, compelled to choose between the sordid circumstances of an overcrowded tenement and the plush comfort of an evening at the Cinema, will rush to the latter in search of the only poetry they are ever likely to know. Yes, poetry, which might so easily *be* poetry.

POETRY FOR THE MILLIONS

Yes, *poetry*. This most attractive form of recreation, the product of our highly industrialised and mechanised life, is capable of being moulded, under right conditions, into poetry for the people. It is cheap, it is comfortable, it is continuous; it is an escape from what we are pleased to call reality; it is undoubtedly a palliative. It is at the same time a most vivid and subtle medium of entertainment. By reason

of its potency in influencing the masses it has become one of the major influences which for good or evil are shaping the civilisation of today and tomorrow. But there is nothing in man or in the Cinema to prevent the Cinema from becoming, except to incorrigible cranks, a very acceptable form of poetry.

At this point I cannot forbear to draw your attention to that daring paragraph by The Editor in the April issue of *Focus* in which he transfers the words of Francis Thompson on the art of poetry to the art of the film. But why daring, in a world not wholly consisting of aesthetic snobs? Yes, the Cinema is truly the poetry of the people and as such is entitled to the prayerful and protective words of the poet. "Suffer her not to wanton." Amen.

You cannot keep the people from the Cinema any more than you can keep the Cinema from the people. Something has been done to prepare the Cinema for the people—censorship and professional criticism have played their parts—but little, far too little, has been done to prepare the people for the Cinema. Schools have a big responsibility. Film appreciation and discussion groups are needed—more of them; to turn out critics, non-professional, every-day, honest-to-goodness, outspoken critics; *millions* of them.

Very well, then—are film critics necessary? Really, dear Editor, I don't think you ought to have put the question!

GABRIEL FALLON.

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FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

DANCING IN THE DARK

Starring: William Powell, Mark Stevens, Betsy Drake, with Adolphe Menjou and Jean Hersholt. Twentieth Century Fox. Technicolor. **Director:** Irving Reis. **Producer:** George Sessel. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 92 minutes.

Here we have a film definitely outside the ambitious class, not a semi-documentary, with no imperious message. It is, however, entertaining and healthy. The efforts to get a good girl into the highlights of Hollywood are rewarded without any massive concentration of chorus girls or "hot" jazz bands. Mr. Powell and Mr. Menjou are well served by their material and the heroine, Miss Drake, is earnest and charming without physical exploitation. The story doesn't matter. The laughs are there.

X.

APPOINTMENT WITH DANGER

Starring: Alan Ladd, Phyllis Calvert, Paul Stewart, Jan Sterling. **Producer:** Robert Fellows. **Director:** Lewis Allen. Presented by Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

The original idea of the film was probably worthwhile, but I think all sorts of warring clichés were subsequently introduced. It has become like an old sock darned with stray bits of wool.

Alan Ladd, a Post Office detective, is given the task of tracking down the murderer of one of his colleagues. An indispensable witness is a nun, Phyllis Calvert, who in consequence becomes the target of murderous attacks. Alan

Ladd is the type of man who thinks that everybody has a "pitch", but in the end he admits that Sister Phyllis is not in her job from motives of self interest.

T.

STARS IN MY CROWN

Starring: Joel McCrea, Ellen Drew. **Producer:** William H. Wright. **Director:** Jacques Tourneur. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

"Will there be any stars in my crown?" is the refrain of the favourite hymn of sincere, manly, ex-service (American Civil War) Parson Gray. His religion is somewhat revivalistic, but it is not treacly or goody-goody. And the film takes it at its face value, sympathetically and without satire or derision.

Walesburg, where he lives, is a small southern town and the favourite pastime in that part of the States then, as now (cf. *Intruder in the Dust*), was lynching negroes. And again it is Juano Hernandez who just escapes. There is an epidemic of typhoid too, and a small boy who yells in the most realistic and ear-splitting way I have ever yet encountered in a film. But for the most part this is a tranquil picture. The elegant belles of Walesburg could never incur the charge of unladylikeness, unless it were for the way in which they waste no time in making soft eyes at the newly arrived minister and doctor. And so some might find the film dull. But I couldn't help feeling well disposed towards its gentle, old-fashioned, Puritan atmosphere as I came away from the press show and saw the people queuing up at the next cinema for *Bitter Rice*, to see the sturdy Silvana Mangano taking part in an armed foursome in a slaughter-house.

Q.

YOUNG MAN OF MUSIC

Starring: Kirk Douglas, Lauren Bacall and Doris Day, with Hoagy Carmichael and Juan Hernandez. A Warner Brothers Picture.
Director: Michael Curtiz.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 105 minutes.

This film is based on the story of an American boy with an urge to express himself in music. But the music that needs to come out of him is not the soothing diatonic melody that satisfied the youthful Mozart. It is a harsh, atonic, surrealistic expression of interior combat which, in spite of its primordial characteristics, definitely has something to say and grips the interest and imagination of even so conservative a music-lover as yours truly. The instrument chosen for this "House Party" type of musical auto-psycopsy is the trumpet which makes it, I fear, rather hard on the ears of the audience, who are assailed for nearly two hours with the brassy self-expression of Rick Martin. Still, it is an interesting film if only for the lesson, probably unconsciously proffered, that not by bread (or music, or self-expression) alone does man live. Man tends naturally to his Maker, and if he does not know who his Maker is then he tends to replace Him with an idol of his own fashioning. If he deliberately rejects his Maker he still has the urge to put something false in His place. This leads to his destruction.

Perhaps Kirk Douglas and his employers have not realised the implications of the story they tell but there they are. The acting of Douglas is powerful and intense and his efforts with the trumpet convincing. (The trumpet is actually played by Harry James.) A special word of praise is due to Juan Hernandez as the gentle, kindly negro who teaches the boy all he knows about trumpet-playing and is then betrayed by his protégé. An unusually sensitive performance is also given by Orley Lindgren as the young Rick.

What a pity there seems to be no other way out of difficult marital situations in this kind of film save divorce. A modicum of thought beforehand would in most cases have prevented the false union to begin with.

V.

THE BIG WHEEL

Starring: Mickey Rooney, Thomas Mitchell, Michael O'Shea, Spring Byington. **Producer:** Samuel Stiefel. **Director:** Edward Ludwig.
Distributors: United Artists.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 92 minutes.

The background for this story is a car-racing track and you see speed gone mad, and you, of course, get your thrills but I couldn't (somehow) accept Mickey Rooney as a car-racing champ. This picture helps us to understand (a) why young men go in for this dare-devil sort of sport; (b) what suffering their parents and loved ones endure on their behalf when they are dashing around the track, breaking their necks and sometimes breaking records. Why do young men go in for this dangerous sport? Is it for sport and for mere love of adventure? If we are to believe Mickey Rooney there is nothing more to it than to hit the "dough" and get rich quickly which rather takes all the sport out of it and robs the racer of his glamour.

E.



In search of music

UNDER MY SKIN

Starring: John Garfield, Micheline Puelle and Orley Lindgren. A Twentieth Century-Fox production. **Director:** Jean Negulesco. **Producer:** Casey Robinson. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

What more could you want? A story by Ernest Hemingway about horses and love. John Garfield as a crack jockey and tough guy. Micheline Puelle, French, neat and charming, ideal for him to make love to, and perfect for close-ups when she croons "à la mode". Orley Lindgren, a really

talented young kid aged eleven who acts with enthusiasm, but motherless, tossed to and fro with his jockey father—the very thing for patches of pathos. Scenes in Italy and Paris. Plenty of horse racing. And some thuggery headed by Luther Adler. What more could you want? The ingredients are there, but it turns out to be just another film such as we have seen before.

Young Lindgren puts up a splendid performance. He could have been precocious, but wasn't. His laughter, smiles and tears are quite winning. You will certainly like him.

G.



John Garfield,
Micheline Puelle
and Orley Lindgren



The Inspector General steps in . . .

The Inspector General

Starring: Danny Kaye, Walter Slezak, Barbara Bates, Elsa Lanchester. **Producer:** Jerry Wald. **Director:** Henry Koster. **Distributors:** Warner Bros. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

G. K. Chesterton's remark that only the thoroughly humble man can enjoy a joke reminds us that there is some sort of affinity between laughter and humility. It is well to realise that **Creators of Laughter** are important people. Who will deny that a laugh is as good as a tonic and sometimes better than a sermon? Like the priest and the poet, **The Creator of Laughter** has it in his power to so condition our

minds that we see ourselves as others see us.

In this satire, **Danny Kaye** makes us laugh at the humbug, the egoism, the stupidity, the cupidity, the duplicity, the sychophancy that can exist in certain councils which are supposed to care for the public; but—and this is the point—by implication he makes us laugh at ourselves and makes it possible for us to "laugh out" of our own systems our own stupidity, cupidity, humbug and what not. The purpose of drama is to cleanse the heart. To cleanse the heart, by laughter, is the purpose of humour, also.

It would be absurd to label **Danny Kaye** as a man with a message. It would be equally absurd to label him as just a "funny-man". He is



... Fire



... at the Banquet

an artist in his own right; and in this film we see the wide range of his art: satire, humour, mimicry, wit, clowning, just ordinary knock-about good fun. Danny Kaye is no mere copyist. He works hard the whole time he is on the screen. And how he works! Notice how he uses his whole mind, heart and body. In one sequence he even makes his ear suggest an idea! He is a man of tremendous vitality, but he is not overpowering. He is versatile and can jump from the ridiculous to the poignant with discretion and dexterity.

The story is about an illiterate but good-hearted fellow (Danny Kaye) who is mistaken for The Inspector General who is coming—incognito—to visit the town of Brodny, with its corrupt town council. I will not spoil your night out by revealing any of the numerous and humorous adventures that come his way. Danny Kaye is (of course) the big laugh; but he is helped, admirably, by the whole cast. **Barbara Bates** who plays Leza, the scullery maid, deserves a special word of praise, for her pleasing manners and rich voice.

The film is beautifully made and beautifully directed. Technicolor adds to its charm.

Warmly recommended.

E.

The Inspector and the Scullery Maid





David fights the blaze



Starring: Ralph Clanton, Edward Underdown, Michael Brennan, Helen Cherry, Michael Trubshawe. A Two Cities Film.
Writer and Director: Terence Young. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 102 minutes.

This film reminded me of the best of the British war-time efforts. It has a worthwhile tale to be told, the semi-anonymous cast which gives freshness and conviction to parts played and the factual approach which lifts the whole thing out of the make-believe atmosphere of the average fictional film. The result is a sense of the true value of the cinema when it is being used to depict subjects that do not violate adult intelligences.

That it is not quite in the same standard as *The True Glory*, *Desert Victory*, *The Way Ahead* or *San Demetrio, London* is due to the fact that, since the end of the war, the urgency and need to use the film as an instrument for the country's benefit has disappeared and film-makers are back again into the competitive rut which

THEY WERE

causes them to think of what will please the public rather than what makes a first-class film. (It is no reflection on individual directors to speak thus: they are all too conscious of the outside factors which prevent them making their films completely to their own sense of artistic integrity; the fact remains that consideration for the public often causes a film to be spoilt.)

Thus, *They Were Not Divided* leaves one with the impression that it was not quite certain in which direction the film was to develop. The story of the discipline which makes a Guardsman what he is (and incidentally, brought them back from Dunkirk still equipped and looking like soldiers) becomes the saga of the friendship of an American and an Englishman which, again, we gather, symbolises the unity in all essential things between America and Britain. It then turns to the tedious uncertainty and aimless meanderings of



or makes a complaint



C.S.M. makes a remark



Waiting to leave for France

OT DIVIDED

tank life in wartime. Interspersed, are idyllic moments with Helen Cherry, who plays the rather hysterical wife of the English Captain in a manner which I can only describe as highly artificial.

Nevertheless, this film is a fine piece of work and one which makes us think with hope again of the future of the native product. It is a film to see several times for the sake of the beautiful playing of the handpicked cast. Particularly to be praised are Ralph Clanton, an American stage actor whose pleasantly modulated voice and subdued acting remind us that the U.S.A. is not all Mickey Rooney; Edward Underdown for a convincing understatement as the English Captain; Stella Andrew for a tenderly conceived rôle as the girl who marries the American, and Michael Trubshawe, a gentleman with an outsize in facial shrubbery, and a native ability to convey character in undertones. His Tank Major is a joy. Also deserving

of mention is R.S.M. Brittain who plays himself most frighteningly. It is a relief to audience as well as to recruits when this mighty Guardsman gives a reassuring wink to his parade-ground victims.

The film was made mainly on location in Germany, which evidently gives it something of its factual flavour. It is a blessed relief to be free of the artificiality of studio lights for once.

Catholics with sharp eyes will be interested to notice that the little New Testament which Helen Cherry gives to her husband as he leaves for the front (he is, perhaps, the non-Catholic half of a mixed marriage?) is a product of the Catholic Truth Society and bears the Imprimatur of the late Bishop of Southwark. It is a pity that the same care for detail was not observed in the case of the Irishman who demurs, when asked to bury his dead companion, because he is not a Catholic! This kind of absurdity could be so easily avoided!

Do go to see *They Were Not Divided*. It will do you good.

SHOULD PARENTS TELL?

Distributors: Eros Films. **Produced** in U.S.A. **Category:** *A. Running time: 70 minutes.*

About this film two things are evident. First, it is a badly scripted, poorly made, timorous attempt to stem the spread of V.D. by means of screen moralising. Second, whatever good effect this second-rate film might have hoped to achieve among intelligent and balanced cinema audiences is vitiated by the unscrupulous and sensation-mongering publicity that has been given it. Unscrupulous because it misleads people as to the nature of the things they are to see depicted on the screen; sensation-mongering because it seems to exploit tragic and serious facts of life in an entertainment programme. Such films should be given special showings to selected audiences. It is extremely distasteful to have them included in normal programmes at commercial cinemas.

The film tells of the unhappiness which comes to a young married couple and the maladjustment which results from ignorance as to the need of mutual understanding and consideration necessary between husband and wife. In a fit of pique the husband, it is implied, seeks consolation in bawdy company. Later, the child that is born to his wife dies, infected with V.D. The wife's parents allow their younger daughter, aged 17, to entertain a large number of jitterbugging young friends of similar age, but do not think she is old enough to be enlightened as to the facts of life when, as a consequence of this indiscriminate friendship, the younger daughter finds herself in a condition which an unqualified surgeon attempts to "remedy" at the peril of her life. The curious thing here is that the young man responsible tearfully insists that he loves the girl, but nobody takes the trouble to point out that his action was neither loving nor tolerable. A doctor, who figures in the film as a kind of chorus, could have been used to much effect if only the screen-writers or sponsors or both knew just what they wanted to say and had the courage to say it unequivocally and with a certain foundation of natural morality (to say nothing of the demands of Christian teaching: though the name of the

Creator is frequently invoked by various characters).

The film is tricked out spasmodically with a few biological diagrams which could add little, I imagine, to the knowledge of the average adolescent and only serve to hold up the action of the story.

A film which has little value and is not to be compared to the much more useful and honestly made *Birth of a Baby*, shown under the same auspices but with the same objectionable publicity some years ago.

V.

BRIDE FOR SALE

Starring: Claudette Colbert, Robert Young and George Brent, with Max Baer, Gus Schilling and Charles Arnt. An R.K.O. Radio Picture. **Director:** William D. Russell. **Certificate:** *A. Category: B. Running time: 87 minutes.*

A light-hearted comedy about an ex-WAC who becomes an income-tax consultant with the object of choosing a satisfactory husband. Her employer induces an old college friend to lead her up the garden, but it is the men who come off second-best when the ex-WAC has used ju-jitsu, guile and a very small engagement ring to lead them by the nose. An uncomplicated film in which all do well what is expected of them, i.e., to entertain.

V.

OH, YOU BEAUTIFUL DOLL

Starring: June Haver, Mark Stevens, S. Z. "Cuddles" Sakall. **Director:** John M. Stahl. **Producer:** George Jessel. Presented by 20th Century-Fox in Technicolor. **Certificate:** *U. Category: B. Running time: 94 minutes.*

"Cuddles" Sakall composes an opera full of beautiful arias. Since it has never been performed he is very poor. Mark Stevens translates the arias into jazz, just a difference of timing, you know. Consequently, "Cuddles" finds himself rich and popular.

T.

ALL THE KING'S MEN

Starring: Broderick Crawford, Joanne Dru, John Derek, and Mercedes McCambridge. **A** Columbia Picture. **Director:** Robert Rossen. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 109 minutes.

It is a curious convention which demands that any similarity to living or dead historical character in films be regarded as accidental or coincidental particularly in a film like *All The King's Men*, which is clearly based on the life of Huey Long, the notorious Governor of Louisiana, who seemed likely to have become the Hitler or Stalin of the U.S.A., but for an assassin's bullet.

Taken from the prize-winning novel by Robert Penn Warren, it is a story which seems to demand more attention for what it says than how it says it. Yet it has to be admitted that here is a film that ranks high from the point of view of technique and acting as well as being the vehicle of a modern parable that grips the imagination and stirs the emotions strongly. The saga of a well-meaning man who begins political life by fighting corruption and becomes Governor and Dictator of the State by means of corruption and merciless suppression of all opposition, it scores mainly as a result of a largely unfamiliar cast, honest acting and skilful direction. The handling of the vast crowds that are inseparable from this kind of political film are an indication of the power of the director. As in *Enfants de Paradis*, the ability to make a crowd look and act like something alive instead of a large stage chorus as in the De Mille tradition, marks out the man who made the film as a first-class director. Nevertheless, I would not have ranked *All The King's Men* as cinematically more important than *The Third Man*, either from the point of view of acting or story treatment. The American film smashes its way across the imagination; the British film insinuates itself into the intellect. However, it is *All The King's Men* which gets the yearly Oscar.

This is a film which is basically religious in that it teaches that man is

degraded and corrupted by the selfish use of power. The doctrine of Willie Stark, the Governor, is pure Lutheran heresy: viz., that man is essentially corrupted and incapable of good. He has a variation on this to the effect that good can come out of evil, but it is Willie Stark who decides what is good and what is evil. When eventually he is killed by a bullet from the brother of the woman he has seduced, he dies still unable to see that what he did was evil and a puzzled "Why?" is his last word.

There are a number of cinematic clichés to which we have become accustomed in this type of political debunking film: the reporter who writes what his paper will not publish; the girl who is converted to the opposition camp and then disillusioned when the idol's feet of clay are discernible, the candidate who tears up the set speech given him by his backers, etc. Still, the film is very acceptable and entertaining, too. The acting of all the principals is excellent with special emphasis on the work of Mercedes McCambridge, Broderick Crawford and John Ireland.

V.

OUTPOST IN MOROCCO

Starring: George Raft, Marie Windsor, Akim Tamiroff. **Producer:** Joseph H. Ermolieff. **Director:** Robert Florey. Released through United Artists. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

George Raft is a captain in the Foreign Legion and helps very considerably in quelling a riot by an Arab tribe. It seemed to me that there was much reckless courage accompanied by neglect of elementary precautions. But none the less it sustains interest quite well. I am always thrilled at the sight of a military expedition weaving its way through barren and dangerous territory.

T.

MOONRISE

Starring: Dana Clark, Gail Russell
 Ethel Barrymore. A Republic
 Picture. **Director:** Frank
 Borsage. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A.

A film which the Academy Cinema, Oxford Street, has rescued from oblivion; one of a growing number of more than average good films which, mysteriously, do not get a press showing in the ordinary way until some enterprising critic playing the now fashionable game of "hunt the picture", runs it to earth in a distributor's office, American trade paper, or suburban flea-pit.

Not a great picture but a very good one with evident qualities of sincerity, simplicity in theme development, thoughtful camera work and firm but fluid direction and acting above the average.

A boy whose father was hanged has grown up embittered and a result of gibing and sneering endured to breaking point has himself killed a man. He is not suspected but conscience and the humane understanding of the local sheriff and the girl whom he loves eventually bring him to give himself up to face his trial.

There is harshness as in the opening sequences showing in impressionistic fashion the gallows which claim his father and a baby's cradle across which their shadows fall. There is tenderness as in the scenes with an old negro hermit in the woods. There is acute observation of character in the dance hall scenes, the small town gossips, the fair scene (almost French in its vivid capturing of atmosphere, reminding one of the last sequences of *Panique*). There is humour as well as pathos. There is tension.

Dana Clark gives the best performance of his career as the embittered killer. Rex Ingram is magnificently dignified as the old negro. Allyn Joslyn (whose face still reminds one that he played Hitler in one of the war-time melodramas) is warm and human as the sheriff. Henry Morgan as a deaf mute who is befriended by and befriends the wanted man, gives a curiously moving performance. Gail Russell is out of

place as the teacher in such a milieu but is, presumably, a concession to the demands of producers with an eye on fan mail. Still, she acts well which half overcomes her glamour.

This is a film which is well worth hunting for.

V.

BRIDGE OF THE FORD

(The Story of Drogheda)

Producer: Andrew Buchanan, for the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

Director: Henry Cooper. **Photo-**

graphy: George Fleischman.

Commentator: Robert Speaight.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

Running time: 40 minutes.

Available in 35mm. and 16mm.

from C.F.I.

This documentary survey in film of the city of Drogheda was frankly made as a programme mate for *Visitation*, the outstanding missionary film made for the Medical Missionaries by the same producer. Consequently, one has the impression that it is being lengthened out to fill a certain time rather than that it is telling a film story as economically and concisely as need be. So many facets of the ancient city are touched upon: archaeological, historical, economic, social, religious, any one of which one would have liked to see developed at some length, but time does not permit more than a glimpse in some cases.

The camera work is beautiful and the commentary covers a lot of ground, and is well-spoken by Robert Speaight. Some shots of the reliquary of Blessed Oliver Plunkett are of unusual interest, as also are some of the municipal treasures shown. This film is a useful companion to a feature film and suggests a similar survey of many another city, both in Ireland and in England. It would be a good thing to have films of this kind perpetuating the historical features of all the interesting and ancient monuments of our country.

V.

THE BEAUTIFUL BLONDE FROM BASHFUL BEND

Starring: Betty Grable, Cesar Romero, Rudy Vallee. **Writer, Producer and Director:** Preston Sturges. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

It seems to me that a film actress who—to a large extent—depends upon the exposition of her legs for success has no great ability. I may be colour-blind or just plain stupid but my reactions were mostly negative. The blonde is not a bit beautiful but she is very bash-full: when she is not shouting or shooting someone or other she is bashing something or someone about.

E.

BLACK MAGIC

Starring: Orson Welles and Nancy Guild, with Akim Tamiroff and Margot Grahame. **Distributors:** United Artists. **Director:** Gregory Ratoff. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 100 minutes.

A bout of 'flu prevented my presence at the Press Show of this film. My duty as a critic demanded that I see it later. I paid some of the money which the Government allows us to spend for ourselves in order to fulfil my duty. I am now wondering what steps could be taken against the distributors for accepting money under false pretences! Duty is a high price to pay for sitting through incoherent, pretentious, preposterous, fantastic, fifth-rate rubbish such as this. It is adding insult to grave injury when duty compels the additional cost of coin of the realm.

Dumas was, of all novelists, the most material-minded mass-producer of pseudo-historical romances. The producers of *Black Magic*, have far outdone the inventive M. Dumas. They have taken his implausible plot about the charlatan who hypnotised the court of Louis XV and left only the names of the characters by which to recognise them. Any event in the film which bears a faint resemblance to the novel from which it was adapted, owes such

resemblance to a lapse of memory on the part of the screenwriters.

One wonders what vestige of integrity or sense of artistic responsibility is left to a man of Orson Welles' ability when he allows himself to be used in this ridiculous fashion. Never was rotten ham so indifferently presented to a jaded palate. One asks whether or not some sea-change has been suffered by the actor who played and made *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons* or even *Lady From Shanghai*. These wells are running dry: or maybe, they were never really very deep? Or perhaps—unpleasant thought—this is the measure of his contempt for the cinema-going public. In that case, the audiences have it in their own hands to apply the remedy.

V.

ALWAYS LEAVE THEM LAUGHING

Starring: Milton Berle, Virginia Mayo, and Ruth Roman. **Producer:** Jerry Wald. **Director:** Roy Del Ruth. **Distributors:** Warner Bros. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 110 minutes.

Once again we have the hackneyed story of how a talented comedian (Milton Berle) rises through failure and disappointment to the fame he well deserved—and all through the encouragement of the girl (Ruth Roman) who believed in him. The inevitable happens, just as it does when a cannibal eats a missionary: "You can't keep a good man down". We are given the customary glimpses of music hall turns, the usual peeps behind the scenes into the dressing rooms where, unsurprisingly, there are lots of chorus girls making-up. And there are occasional flashes of express trains, just to let us know the show has moved on.

Some of the "numbers" were good enough to raise some spontaneous laughter from the press audience (an accomplishment indeed!), but these items were chiefly from the early part of the film where our comedian was doing the old-fashioned clap-trap funny man stuff, and doing it exceedingly well. It is the humour we used to see which we are now supposed to have

grown out of. But once Berle became the great and accomplished comedian, modern style, he seemed less funny and barely raised a laugh. Is that because we are unappreciative, or because American humour is not our cup of tea?

G.

THE DANCING YEARS

Starring: Dennis Price, Giselle Preville, Patricia Dainton, Antony Nicholes.
Producer: Warwick Ward.
Director: Harold French. **Distributors:** Associated British-Pathé, Ltd. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B.

As far as I know, Ivor Novello does not desire his works to be anything other than superficial, colourful, lavish, pseudo-gay, pseudo-romantic with lots of frills, flounces and frivolity. "Let the people forget" seems to be the Novello philosophy of life. The word escapist has been badly overworked, but it best describes *The Dancing Years*. A nice sub-title would be: *Flight from reality*. For about ninety minutes we are danced into a world which is unreal, so unreal that you would almost think that life was one long reel of fun and games.

The people we meet are painted and aggressively gay (much too aggressively gay to create verisimilitude); they make love lightly and (of course) have no regard for the sacrament of marriage and keep alive the lie that artists are "a people apart", undisciplined and perpetually unfaithful to their partners.

Giselle Preville looks well and acts well, but I got the impression that she was not at home with such light stuff. Dennis Price gave me a similar impression. But Patricia Dainton, the nineteen-year-old Scottish born actress who plays Grete is very real and displays real talent and radiates charm and sincerity. This young lady is well worth noticing.

I would not be such a prig as to pretend that a little escapism is not (sometimes) good for the soul. No one in his or her right senses would believe that this musical play is a true interpretation of life and for tired minds the picturesque shots of the lake-side village of St. Wolfgang, the

colourful costumes, the light of heart songs and the smooth, rhythmical flow of pictures will act as a tonic.

E.

LES PARENTS TERRIBLES

Starring: Jean Marais, Josette Day, Yvonne de Bray, Gabrielle Dorziat and Marcel Andre.
Distributors: Studio One Distributors Ltd. **Director and Screenwriter:** Jean Cocteau. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

This is a disturbing film. Not only is it decadent from the literary point of view, but even considered as a piece of camera work, it suggests the mind of a man who is uncertain of himself. Starting with a curiously surrealist shot of a man's eyes seen through a binocular-like contraption (it transpires that the man is an inventor and this one of his gadgets) we are then whisked up by a giddy-making crane shot to get a view of a woman collapsed over a wash-basin while the man runs frantically about calling for his sister-in-law who is, apparently accustomed to dealing with the poison-taking habits of his wife. The camera then descends to stage level and for the remainder of this morbid study of neurotic middle-agers and unbalanced youth gives us the impression of a play being photographed.

It is a trick with high-brows to use high-falutin' words to disguise low habits. Oedipus-complex, says the dictionary is a psychoanalyst's term for an infantile fixation on the mother. Freud assumed that self-control was impossible. In this film it is clear that what Jean Marais most needs is a boot well-applied to a posterior position; then he might have thought better of running to his mother's bed for a bout of hysterical weeping. The cause of the tears? He has discovered that his fiancée is having an affair with his father. Need I say more? The brilliant acting of the two elderly women and the charm of Josette Day coupled with scintillating dialogue cannot divest this film of its objectionable odour. It stinks.

V.

GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

Central Film Library, Imperial Institute,
S.W.7. After July 31st: Government
Buildings, Bromyard Avenue,
Acton, W.3.

L.C.C. Library.

Foundation Film Library, Brooklands
House, Weybridge, Surrey.

SOME AGRICULTURAL FILMS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

These films aim to put over British farming to the general public, and succeed very well in making the layman appreciate the highly skilled nature of the work, and the scientific organisation and mechanisation on which it is based. They take us behind the scenes and make us understand the significance of our book knowledge.

Many of the commentaries are in dialect which, while giving local colour, is not always easy to follow by ears attuned to B.B.C. accents; and much incidental "music" has to be endured. However, the films are full of geographical interest and are especially useful for 15 years and over.

Winter on the Farm

C.F.L. Sound. U.K.384. (15 minutes.)

This provides an eye-opener for townfolk who only know the country in summer. We tour a large "mixed" farm in Dorset, along with the farmer on his daily round of inspection—the dairy cattle which need attention day in, day out; the sheep in the folds for the beginning of the lambing season; the daily cartage of winter feed for both cattle and sheep; the work of hedging, and ditching, and clearing of drains; the fertilising and the

ploughing of the land; the repair of farm machinery and a thousand and one jobs which belong to this season of preparation and maintenance.

Spring on the Farm

C.F.L. Sound. U.K.385. (15 minutes.)

This film is photographed in Hereford and continues the work of preparation with the sowing and rolling, and explains the purpose of the various operations and the use of the different machines. The contribution of research stations to agricultural progress is emphasised.

Summer on the Farm

C.F.L. Sound. U.K.386. (12 minutes.)

The main interest in June is the hay crop, especially when as here, in Lancashire and Cheshire, dairy-farming is of prime importance because of the proximity of the industrial population. Modern machinery takes care of the heaviest part of the work and leaves the farmer more time to deal with his green vegetables, root crops and small fruits which are likewise destined for the industrial towns. These towns depend on the farms, but the farms in turn depend on the towns for the extra seasonal labour required.

The Crown of the Year

C.F.L. Sound. U.K.387. (19 minutes.)

This fourth film of the series photographs the grain harvest in East Anglia in great detail, giving close-ups of all the machinery in action so that we townfolk get a real insight into the mysteries of the reaping, binding, loading and threshing machines. The

harvesting of the root crops follows and then the Harvest Festival, after which the ploughs go out at once to the stubble fields, the crop rotation plans are made, and the preparations for the next year are already begun.

Make Fruitful the Land

C.F.L. U.K.884. Colour. (17 minutes.)

The constant intensive use of our land raises the question of the preservation of its fertility through the centuries. In earlier years the "three field system" was followed and this is ingeniously shown by models of Saxon times. In the 18th century scientific crop rotation, the Norfolk "four course system", displaced the earlier method and increased production without exhausting the soil. Modern machinery aids maximum output from this intensive farming system.

Fenlands

C.F.L. U.K.732. (19 minutes.)

This film shows how 300 years of land-drainage have completely changed the face of the land from deserted fen to intensively cultivated farmland. The wild-fowler is still there, but the main interest is grain, vegetables, sugar-beet and fruit which are sold in nearby market towns or in London. The prosperity of this richest of England's farmland depends on constant vigilance over the whole complex drainage system.

Cornish Valley

C.F.L. U.K.579. (17 minutes.)

Very good views of coastal scenery, rock structure, wind-swept uplands and deep sheltered valleys, are followed by details of life on a small family farm in one of these self-sufficient valleys, where outside help is not available and mechanisation is not practicable because of the difficulties of relief.

The Downlands

C.F.L. U.K.794. (17 minutes.)

These Downlands stretch from Dover to the Cotswolds and Mendips, and

were the homes of ancient man, whose traces remain in Stonehenge and various fortifications. The dominant interest has always been sheep-rearing, but cattle are today supplanting sheep, and there is now arable farming on lower ground. The introduction of modern machinery simplifies the work and solves the labour problem.

Britain's Livestock

C.F.L. U.K.1143. Colour. (20 minutes.)

Excellent photographs of the chief breed of cattle make recognition easy, and show the results of 200 years of intelligent breeding, which has increased production in meat and in milk, while maintaining the excellence of the herds. Our pedigree stock is consequently in great demand the world over and forms one of our leading exports.

Suitability : 15+.

Hill Sheep Farm

C.F.L. U.K.1126. (19 minutes.)

This excellent film of the Scottish Highlands together with *The Crofters*, makes a very good contrast to the foregoing films of England by showing the greater difficulties of the rugged environment, the less attractive conditions of life, the absence of mechanisation, and the self-sufficiency engendered by these isolated regions.

Hill Sheep Farm shows the Highlands as the natural breeding ground of the sturdiest British flocks, which when crossed with the bigger lowland breeds produce the world's finest animals. All phases of the sheep-farmer's work throughout the year are shown in most interesting fashion so that we come to appreciate the highly skilled nature of this exacting job.

The Crofters

C.F.L. U.K.550. (24 minutes.)

Here we see the many interests of an isolated community, necessarily resourceful and self-reliant, among the wild and barren mountains of the

Northern Highlands. The sheep round-up is excellently photographed and gives a very good opportunity to see the character of land which has been heavily glaciated.

East Anglia

L.C.C. Silent. Colour. Also : Foundation Film Library. 416.E.2. Hire : 11s. first day.

This film makes a regional study of East Anglia and so differs from the previous ones in scope and purpose, but agriculture is still the dominating theme.

It is well executed in colour, giving panoramas of the sweeping countryside, and showing soil conditions—the underlying chalk topped by the glacial drift; and the utilisation of the heavier soils for wheat, the lighter for barley, the poor sands for timber.

The leading crops are shown in some detail for recognition purposes, and likewise pedigree stock. In addition, the Broads, the fishing ports, the packet station of Harwich, the manufactures of Norwich are all shown systematically with frequent maps for localisation.

It makes a good revision film for seniors, the absence of sound being most conducive to the study atmosphere; but the particularly subdued colouring, though true to nature, makes a perpetual twilight.

FOUR ORDNANCE SURVEY

FILMS L.C.C.

This is an extremely good series on map-reading (1 inch to 1 mile) made as Army Instructional films, but quite within the scope of all map users, hikers, scouts, guides as well as students.

Conventional Signs is of general interest, while the others are of specialised interest in the interpretation of contours.

They all set out to teach, and they do it most effectively, with the result that the map comes to life.

Map-Reading. Conventional Signs

This is of interest to anyone who motors, cycles or walks in the country with a map. It is designed as an introduction to the intelligent reading and interpretation of Ordnance Survey Maps. It shows the value of scale, lays particular emphasis on the classification of roads in relation to width, surface and traffic, and gradually reduces the features of the whole countryside to appropriate symbols. Contours are not considered.

Suitability : 13+.

Contours, Hills and Slopes

This gives a very clear and simple demonstration of the meaning of contours through actual photographs and 'animated diagrams'; it confines its attention to the simplest hill forms, and to types of slope—uniform, convex and concave.

Suitability : 13+.

Contours, Spurs and Re-Entrants

This continues with the interpretation of contour maps of hillier country than that shown previously, and country cut into by many rivers. It concentrates by means of animated diagrams on the representation of the resulting spurs and re-entrants.

Suitability : 14+.

Intervisibility of Points

This gives a very clear exposition by contour reading, simple section drawing and photographs of the question of intervisibility. It emphasises the interference caused by local features which do not appear on the map, e.g., mounds, hollows and hedges, so that actual reconnaissance is often necessary. These reconnaissance photographs are a great help in filling in the details round the bare bones of the map and in making it come to life.

Suitability : 14+.

VATICAN

This is an interesting film enterprise which, it is hoped, will contribute to the Holy Year intention of unity among all men of goodwill in the battle for the survival of religion.

Hans Neiter O'Leary, the Producer, is a Protestant who went to Rome with the idea of making a film that would tell in pictures something of what the Vatican stands for in the history of civilisation and, more recently, its contribution to peace and the welfare of mankind. Made in technicolor, it includes a personal appearance of the Holy Father as well as ceremonies in St. Peter's and a tour of the Vatican Art Galleries.

For the first time, permission was obtained to bring into the Vatican Palace, the complicated apparatus for providing electric power for the lights and camera. Every precaution was taken to avoid damage to the priceless art treasures as a result of heat and

thermometer tests were taken every few minutes to ensure that the temperature was correct.

Hans Neiter O'Leary, in an interview with the Holy Father, pointed out that he was a Protestant whereupon the Pope said, "But I am here for you too!" The team was composed of Italians and Englishmen, among the latter being Cyril Knowles, cameraman, a Catholic, and brother of Bernard Knowles the well-known Director. Mr. O'Leary (the son of a Lutheran father and born in America) told me that he insists that all personnel accompanying him on such a mission should be persons of real religious sympathies even though they may not necessarily be Catholics. He considers that it is not possible for a man to enter into the religious spirit of such a film unless he himself is moved by deep religious convictions.

The film will be released to the major circuits by Easter. 16mm. copies will be available shortly afterwards for non-theatrical distribution.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 3 and 4)

<i>A Chance to Live</i>	(106)
<i>Adam's Rib</i>	(A) (107)
<i>Africa Screams</i>	(C) (114)
<i>A Kiss for Corliss</i>	(B) (78)
<i>Angel With the Trumpet</i>	(A) (81)
<i>Astonished Heart, The</i>	(A) (105)
<i>Bagdad</i>	(B) (109)
<i>Battleground</i>	(A) (114)
<i>Bitter Rice</i>	(A) (109)
<i>Boys in Brown</i>	(B) (80)
<i>Buccaneer's Girl</i>	(B) (85)
<i>Chain Lightning</i>	(D) (115)
<i>Copper Canyon</i>	(C) (75)
<i>Francis</i>	(B) (79)
<i>Golden Salamander</i>	(C) (76)
<i>Happiest Days of your Life, The</i>	(A) (108)
<i>Il Miraculo</i>	(A) (73)
<i>Le Roi</i>	(A) (78)

<i>Long is the Road</i>	(106)
<i>Madeleine</i>	(A) (82)
<i>Miss Pilgrim's Progress</i>	(C) (78)
<i>Morning Departure</i>	(B) (110)
<i>Neptune's Daughter</i>	(74)
<i>No Place for Jennifer</i>	(A) (84)
<i>Not Wanted</i>	(A) (79)
<i>Out of the Darkness</i>	(C) (115)
<i>Red Danube, The</i>	(A) (112)
<i>Riding High</i>	(C) (107)
<i>Rugged O'Riordans, The</i>	(B) (74)
<i>Three Came Home</i>	(A) (108)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
<i>When Willie Comes Marching Home</i>	(C) (107)
<i>Woman in Hiding</i>	(B) (75)
<i>Your Witness</i>	(B) (86)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Come to the Stable</i>	(C) (12)
<i>It's a Great Feeling.</i>	(B) (85)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B) (70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A) (159)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B) (80)
<i>The Search</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

No Place for Jennifer

Sir,

The point I wished to make is not negated by my stupid *lapsus calami* which placed the words "fruit of thy womb" on the lips of the Angel. That they are found in the Angelical Salutation at all elevates the conception of maternity to celestial planes and helps to make all selfish use of marriage peculiarly odious.

With reference to *Your Witness*: may I venture to remark that the polished acting of Robert Montgomery is not in question; it is the disproportion and theatrical tempo produced by deliberately slow cutting that I deplored. It is not easy for the director star to view his film with the same artistic detachment of the director to whom all the players are pieces in a moving tapestry. The fact that Adam is the central character in *Your Witness* does not alter this fact. On the other hand, in *Lady in the Lake* in which Montgomery was also the central character and the director, we had to look in a mirror to catch a glimpse of him!

As your correspondent infers, I had overlooked publicity information about Patricia Cutt's change of name. However, referring to Trade Press reviews of *The Adventures of P.C.* 49, I am not encouraged to think that as Patricia Wayne, she has yet mastered the art of acting.

As for "second features", it is, I believe, part of your policy eventually to cover all films offered for public entertainment. This will entail more space and greater support for Focus. I trust that both may be forthcoming.

Yours faithfully,

V.

A.B.C.

Sir,

Having felt for some time that improvements might be made in Focus I would like to take the opportunity which your February editorial gives of offering my criticisms.

Could you not (a) start a 16mm. section—there are many of us who long for that; (b) have a series of articles describing Catholic film action around the country. It is very helpful to be able to contact others working for the same ends. We might be able to help each other; (c) give frequent reviews both of foreign films actually in this country, and of films which would be good to bring to this country in order that members of film societies should agitate accordingly.

Yours is a review with such great possibilities that you will forgive a well-wisher for a few assaults, only intended to help you on your way—not to get in it.

Yours,

PETER HASTINGS.

46 Wilkies Lane,
Dundee.

(a. I could, if I could get a writer to handle this feature.

b. I shall be delighted to publish news about any Catholic Film Centre.

c. Is already in operation.—E.D.)

Sir,

Your readers may be interested to know that the March of Time documentary *A Chance to Live* which I reviewed for you in the March Focus has received the Academy Award, tying first place for the best documentary of the year.

Gaudia Paschalia.

Yours,

G.

Power Cut

Sir,

It is "dim bulb", not "bull". (X's review of *The Red Danube*—Focus for April.)

Yours, etc.,

"15 WATTS".

Liverpool.

INSTITUTE NOTES

C.F.I. Summer School

The place: Convent of the Assumption, Ramsgate, Kent. The time: August 8th—12th inclusive. The fee: £2 10s. 0d. inclusive for members of the C.F.I. (non-members £2 15s. 0d.). Accommodation for 50 students, dormitory and full board. Ladies will be housed in the convent; gentlemen in a nearby prep. school. Priests have been offered private accommodation through the courtesy of Reverend Mother.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible. Other details as to times, route, etc., will be sent out in due course.

The names of lecturers will be announced later. It is hoped that a film of the Summer School may be made in which the students will take an active part.

Film Competition

The following well-known people have kindly consented to act as adjudicators for the Film Competition: Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart, Film Critic; Andrew Buchanan, Producer and Director; The Very Reverend Hilary Carpenter, O.P., Chairman of the Catholic Film Institute and Lyn Lockwood, Screen-writer and Dramatist.

You are reminded that films, silent or sound, on any subject, may be submitted. Entries to be sent in not later than September 30th, 1950. This is your opportunity to help us to select teams of technicians who will enable the work initiated by Andrew Buchanan in the production of worthwhile religious films of professional standard to continue.

Film Show

As will be seen from the account contributed by Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart, the showing of Carl Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* at the Challoner Club was a successful venture. We did not expect so many enthusiasts to support us and the room was, as a result, rather overcrowded. Next time,

it is evident, we must look for a larger projection hall.

We hope to secure for showing a number of the Italian art films which have received such warm praise from the Festival audiences. Suggestions from members as to the films they would wish to see will be welcomed. Be it remembered however, that our primary object is film appreciation and only secondary edification and entertainment! It is not impossible, of course, to secure all three at one go, but the films which will enable us to satisfy this desideratum are rather few in number.

Film Course

We have isolated enquiries from various parts of London and the provinces as to whether a Catholic Film Appreciation Group exists within striking distance of the enquirer's neighbourhood. The answer is usually "not yet". We want to help in the formation of such groups as much as we can but the initiative must come from you. If you will let us know what the chances are of a room to speak in and what you want to do, we will come and try to start you off. A large number is not necessary for a Film Study Group. Eight or a dozen enthusiasts is better than fifty passengers.

In the meantime do use Andrew Buchanan's articles as a basis of study. Do not hesitate to write to him if you have any problems. He is only too anxious to be of service.

Film Lectures

Lectures have recently been given at Wokingham, Sevenoaks, Rotherhithe (with a film show), Bath, and during the C.A.G.O. Training Course at Upper Norwood, London.

Holy Year Film Pilgrimage

The World Congress-Pilgrimage of Catholic film personnel which takes place at Rome, May 26th—28th, has been thrown open to members of the

C.F.I. A plane has been chartered and the pilgrims will join the representatives of Catholic Film Action from many other countries together with well-known personalities of the film world to hear the Holy Father's address on the problems of the cinema and to take part in the various devotions arranged for the Congress. Visits to an Italian studio and contacts with Italian film people are arranged.

By the time these notes appear it will be almost too late to receive further bookings, but last-minute arrangements may be possible in exceptional cases. Details from The Secretary, 20 Ovington Square.

International Film Review Translators Needed

Several of the panel of translators who have kindly helped us in the past have had to withdraw their services owing to pressure of other work. We are very grateful to them for their help. We now have need of the services of other persons capable of and willing to undertake translations of articles about film matters from French and Spanish into English.

It is necessary to point out that such articles are often of a technical nature and need to be put into readable English, which is not at all as simple

as it may sound. As the primary purpose of the International Film Review is to help to develop a Christian Philosophy of the Cinema it is clear that the articles need to be of some considerable literary excellence in their own right, so to say. To help us to achieve this is to do a work of great importance. Modest honoraria can be paid if desired. Please help us to make known the Catholic principles of sound film art by means of the Review which the Holy Father has recently described as indispensable to the work of Catholic Film Action.

The Sacrifice We Offer. A Version for Children?

It has been suggested that it would be useful to have a version of Alan Turner's successful film on the Mass specially commentated for children. Mr. Turner has agreed to ask Father Hubert McEvoy to write another commentary with this end in view if the demand justifies it. We shall be glad, therefore, to hear from our readers on this subject.

Alan Turner recently had a letter from the Apostolic Delegate in which His Grace expresses The Holy Father's pleasure at the initiative which resulted in such a useful film being made and conveys the Holy Father's Blessing to all concerned with the film.

BOOK REVIEW

Designing for Films. Edward Carrick.
(The Studio Publications, 18/-.)

What a pleasure it is to read a technical book by an author who is a master of his art and also possesses the gift of revealing the secrets of his art in attractive prose! I found *Designing for Films* revealing and refreshing. It belongs to the "How to do it" series and gives us a clear understanding of the work of film designing; it is a mine of authoritative information and should serve as a text book for professional and amateur film makers. This is not just a theory book. It tells you how to do it in a most interesting way. Edward Carrick covers such subjects as: Conception and design, planning and execution, colour, materialisation of things, the plasterers, the wood-workers, the painters, backings and trick-shots, the

property department, film effects.

Although this book is written primarily for the practical man, it should not be missed by the film critic, by the man in the street who is not quite sure whether film is an art or an industry, by the ever-increasing number of filmgoers who desire to take their films intelligently.

I notice in the March issue of *Focus* that Andrew Buchanan has recommended certain books for those who are following his film course. Among his list I would include Edward Carrick's *Designing for Films*. As this is the sort of book which the reader will want to keep for reference and to re-read it is not expensive. It is beautifully produced, there is a design and a dignity about it which will please all booklovers.

F. D. F.

COVER PERSONALITY

JOSEPH CALLEIA

Joseph Calleia is tough on and off the screen. He has a long stage tradition. He loves his work and is in every sense an adventurous person. He was born on August 4th, 1887, at Rabat, Malta. As a small boy, Calleia loved music though to become an actor was his greatest ambition, so much so that he played "theatres" in his backyard. Today, music is still his hobby. He wrote semi-classical variety hits which were published in New York and London. "My heart is calling" and "Pidelai" are his latest musical creations.

As a youth he studied engineering. He was a pupil at St. Ignatius' College for one year and he graduated to St. Aloysius' College where he appeared in every stage performance organised by the Jesuit Fathers. It was at this time Calleia turned his mind to the stage, and decided to try his luck in England. His father opposed him, his mother encouraged him in every way to take up a stage career.

In 1914 Calleia left Malta for good and went to England where he stayed for two years. In 1917 he left for his promised land, the United States of America where he believed that success awaited him. He joined up as a chorus boy in Jerome Kern's musical, "Have a Heart" which was his first step to success.

Calleia needed a professional name. He couldn't use the name of his father who had opposed him; so he adopted his mother's maiden name *Spurin*. Thus equipped he staged a vaudeville act impersonating Harry Lauder. Two years' hard work followed, with the distinguished producer Otis Skinner from whom he learned much and for whom he appeared in a play "Pietro".

From now on he was in demand and appeared in dramatic plays, notably "The Broken Wing" which had a long run in New York. When the play had toured America it was presented at the

opening of the Duke of York's theatre in London in 1922. Calleia was present.

It was a great success and applauded by every newspaper. His father read the notices and was so pleased that when his son returned to Malta to visit him before going back to America (now his adopted country) he said to him: "Joe, can't you use my name?" This was a surprise to Joseph, for he never expected his father who had opposed him to manifest such approval.

Joe replied: "Well, I'll see what can be done about it". For he had now become well known on the stage as *Joseph Spurin*. However, to please Pop, he became Joseph Spurin Calleia.

When "The Broken Wing" had completed its London season, Calleia spent two years studying opera and gave several concerts in New York. "An artistic success but a financial flop," said Calleia. He continued his musical studies and discovered that these helped enormously as an actor.

Now came "Zanda the Great", with Alice Brady. This was followed in 1925 by a musical called "Princess Flavia". In 1926 he became actor-manager in a play called "Broadway" which ran for two years in New York. Then followed a play for Gilbert Miller "The Front Page", which ran for two years and "The Last Mile", which ran for 18 months. This was in 1932.

Joseph Calleia was now very well known. Now came "The Grand Hotel", which played for two years, and "Ten Minute Alibi" which ran for one year, and a play called "Honeymoon".

Calleia's big chance came in 1935, when he was playing in "The Small Miracle", which ran solely on his performance as the gangster. Offers poured in from Hollywood. To hit the screen, Calleia signed a contract for two years with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. "I was miserable the whole time," he said. However, Hollywood had claimed him

and he appeared in a succession of tough rôles which brought him success.

He starred in *Public Hero No. 1*; *Man of the People*; *Tough Guy*; *Sinner Take All*; *His Brother's Wife*; *Riff Raff*; *Exclusive Story*; *Badman of Brimstone*; *Badman of Wyoming*; *Sworn Enemy*; *After the Thin Man*; *Full Confession*.

In 1936, he wrote a film script for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer called *Robin Hood of Eldorado*. This film concluded his contract. He then decided to freelance. He believed very definitely that an artist should be a freelance. **To Calleia, art is an international thing, a gift to be used freely for a better understanding between people.**

Calleia's first film as a freelance was *Algiers* with Hedy Lamarr and Charles Boyer. He regards this film as one of his best rôles. It enabled him to break away from gangster parts for a time. Oddly enough, he was strictly on the side of the law here, for he plays the rôle of a police inspector. This rôle won him the Critics' Award in America. Since then he has worked for most of the American Film Companies. His

films include: *Algiers*; *Five Came Back*; *The Gorilla*; *Marie Antoinette*; *Juarez*; *My Little Chickadee*; *The Golden Boy*; *The Glass Key*; *The Monster and the Girl*; *Sundown*; *The Jungle Book*; *The Cross of Lorraine*; *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; *The Conspirators*; *Gilda*; *Deadline At Dawn*; *The Beginning or the End*; *They Passed This Way*; *Vendetta*; *Personal Column*; *Lured*; *Noose*; *The Noose Hangs High*; *After Midnight* and *Palomino*.

In 1948, he flew to England to appear in Edward Dryhurst's production *Noose* in which he co-starred with Carole Landis and Derek Farr.

Since then, he has appeared in several stage plays such as "All My Sons" and "Until the Thaw".

Quite recently he appeared in the following films: *Vendetta*, with Faith Domergue, *After Midnight*, with Alan Ladd and Wanda Hendrix, which was followed by *Palomina*, with Beverly Tyler.

JOSEPH GABER of Rabat.

Out of the Darkness : FILM PREMIERE

The world Premiere of the new missionary film, *Out of the Darkness*, took place at the Institut Francais, through the courtesy of the French Embassy, on February 27th. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Godfrey, who made it clear that he was present as the personal representative of His Holiness and in this way added yet another sign of the approbation with which the Holy See regards Catholic Film Action. His Grace also took advantage of the opportunity to praise the heroic work of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Killeshandra whose pioneering efforts in Nigeria this film illustrates.

Among the distinguished audience were many members of Religious Orders and the Diplomatic Corps. We were particularly glad to have with us Dr. Andre Ruszkowski, the indefatigable and ubiquitous General Secretary for External Affairs of the Office Catho-

lique International du Cinema. Dr. Ruszkowski was on his way back from Dublin where he had delivered a most interesting lecture on The Light and Shade of Religious Films. We hope to have the privilege of publishing this lecture in due course.

Out of the Darkness has had a successful run at the Hammer Theatre, Wardour Street, London. It is to be shown at various centres in and around London before making its way through the country. The Sisters of the Holy Rosary of Killeshandra will be grateful for any initiative which can be undertaken to enable them to show their film either at a public cinema or in other places. The proceeds of the showings are all to be devoted to the work of the missions. The film is available in 35mm. and 16mm. Information from Catholic Film Institute, 20 Ovington Square, London, S.W.3, or from the Sisters of Holy Rosary of Killeshandra, 317a Portobello Road, London, W.11.

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

JUNE 1950

No. 6

Tribute to our Chairman

There was a time, during its growth, when The Catholic Film Institute in this country did not know whether it was on its head or on its feet. Then, Very Rev. Father Hilary Carpenter, O.P., came along and put the Institute firmly on its feet and created a new spirit. In every way Fr. Hilary is a big man; we feel that he is big enough to accept a few words of tribute. Wherefore, our Editorial space, this month, has been turned over to our Hon. Secretary who writes . . .

We cannot let this opportunity pass without offering to our revered Chairman, our warm felicitations upon his re-election as Prior Provincial of the English Dominicans. It is an opportunity, also, to express to Father Hilary our devoted affection and gratitude for the unstinting way in which he has placed his time and his talents at the disposal of the Catholic Film Institute. Indeed, we have every reason to be grateful for his devotion to our needs in addition

to his arduous duties as Prior Provincial. It is not easy to think what we should do were he to be withdrawn from us. It is not too much to say that the Catholic Film Institute has come to depend very much upon his wise guidance and direction.

From the days when with our "Father Founder", Father Ferdinand Valentine, Father Hilary played a considerable part in moulding the original policy of the Film Society, through the period when, as Editor of *The Flarepath*, he consistently advocated the need for constructive Catholic Film Action, till the fortunate day when we were able to compel him to take his proper place at our head, **he has done more than any other individual known to us to propagate the wishes of Pope Pius XI that good films be promoted and it would be difficult to estimate the debt which the C. F. I. owes to him.**

J. A. V. B.

IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY? By SIDNEY F. WICKS

Editor's Note.—When I wrote to Sidney F. Wicks, I was unaware of his illness. With his customary courage and courtesy he replied that he would dictate the article to his Secretary and that I would have it without fail.

Sidney F. Wicks is a man of wide culture and experience. His article goes to the heart of the matter. The points he makes demand attention. He is well known, particularly in the North of England as Author, Editor of three newspapers and Lecturer. For some years he has been working on a book about St. Francis of Assisi.

* * * *

I am dictating this article during a regime in a nursing home, under which I am forbidden to use my eyes: that is to say I may neither read nor write. So that at least for a week I shall not be subject to the lust of the eyes. I may not even look at pictures, and as for the abhorrent device for killing home life — Television—this, of course, is taboo. I am, therefore, in the right mood to talk about the Cinema and the Film Industry. The Editor has asked me to say something positive about the future of the films, and it may be that, through this enforced policy of the shut eye, I may be given inner light.

ON THE DOWNWARD PATH

I imagine it was a retrograde step when pictures were made to move and the Cinema was called the

Movies. When a child looks at a picture, his imagination builds up the past life and behaviour of the characters, and gives him a vision of their future, so that when a picture is made to move the imagination suffers. A further downward step was taken when pictures not only moved but spoke. The child looking at a picture book depicting the story of Cinderella can compose for himself what the Prince is saying when he gazes at the crystal slipper upon Cinderella's lovely foot.

The latest step on the downward path is to make balloons issue from the characters in pictures telling the child what they are saying. I suppose in a children's comic Juliet would be depicted leaning over the balcony with a balloon issuing from her mouth containing the sentence: "I love you". This seems to be leading nowhere, but it gives me confidence as a Dictator.

FILMS AND THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

Proceeding on the absurd assumption that we can effect a speedy improvement in the quality of films, I should like to say that I do not believe in religious films. By religious films I mean those which obviously set out to do a little good-natured propaganda for the popular conception of Christianity. As a Catholic, I suspect films which are full of monks and nuns, and bells

ringing and censers swinging. The strategy of the Christian ethic is not to nag the world into faith or to reduce divine miracles to the status of a fairy tale. **The Holy Catholic Church is not to adopt the rôle of a fussy Moses ever coming down from a toy Mount Sinai with propagandist leaflets hot from the press.** The Christian ethic aims at permeating society so that its underlying loyalties are Christian, with all the currents of its being set to God. God may not even be mentioned, but He is an assumption which permeates all Society's life. **No, we do not ask for religious films but for films which spring from the subconscious reverence for Christian Ethic and Faith.** The appalling thing about most films and certainly nearly all of our modern novels is that they do not seem to be aware that Christ lived and died nineteen hundred years ago or that there is a Holy Law which holds the destiny of man in its hands. In short, they are pagan. No, not even pagan, for paganism had its decent rites and sanctions. **What we have in most films and novels is a paganism arising from a civilisation which, some time or other, has denied the Christian Faith.**

WE MUST FACE REALITIES

How, then, are we to secure a new order in the film industry? The hope that by cultivating a critical faculty amongst Christians which will put the fear of God into the Cinema box office is futile. It ignores the colossal fact that the people who flock to the picture houses do not go because they have chosen to patronise any particular film. The visitation of the picture houses is a mass habit and people will go to the pictures

whatever the nature of the film to be shown.

We must face realities, even the elementary reality that no human effort can rise higher than its source. It is not necessary for me to say what the source of the Film Industry is like, and if it is supposed that either Hollywood or its English equivalent can send up Christian pictures

"As effortless as woodland nooks
Send violets up and paint them
blue."

If you are in any doubt about this, study Film Publicity. I am ready to declare that no worse publicity is put forth than that which the Film Industry perpetrates. Study the pages of your provincial city newspapers and see the screaming sensational slogans which call attention to the weekly programme—clutching hands, staring eyes, with some oft-divorced star masquerading as an innocent maiden swooning in the arms of some Dago Spiv. **Even if the film happens to be good, or innocuous, by accident the slime of the Publicity Man will poison it.** It is this last point of the box office which indicates the original source. What I am getting at is that only a Christian civilisation, alive with Christian Music, Literature and Art, can produce the films which answer to the ethical demands of the Catholic Church.

BEING IS MORE POTENT THAN DOING

These statements are sweeping, and the accusation is a railing one. I do not forget that there are signs of moral uneasiness in the Film Industry, and that good films are sometimes produced in a mood of undefined penitence. I think that

amongst those employed by the Film Industry are many who would be glad if their masters would give them something better to do.

Is all this, then, a counsel of despair? If it were only that, it were an ill thing to publish it in *Focus*, with its constructive aims and its educational purpose. I have written (or dictated) in this way because I think we must face realities before we can progress in our task. **To get busy is not always the first thing to do. Being is more potent than doing. Prophecy must come before the event and vision must be prelude to reality.**

By all means let us create a critical faculty amongst Catholics so that they may know the difference between the good film and the bad. There must be a public waiting for

the better days ahead. We must educate our people into praying and longing that an art so big with potentialities of good and ill shall be at long last dominated by the Christian Faith. By all means let Catholics applaud a good film and vociferously abhors a bad one. No righteousness comes unless we hunger and thirst after it. If you were to corner me and demand that I should declare what I believe to be the most constructive thing we can do to regenerate the Film Industry, I should be forced to reply—**Give your whole love and loyalty, your soul and your strength to the building up of the Holy Catholic Church that she may create a civilisation from which shall arise a film industry consonant with our faith.**

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IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

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Melchior in Movieland



I see that Atlantis has popped up into the news again . . .

The legend of the fabulous continent, which was engulfed in a day and a night to disappear beneath the waters of the Atlantic, has fascinated men for centuries and centuries. The legend was old when Plato wrote about it; its origin is shrouded in the mists of antiquity; someday, perhaps, its truth will actually be established beyond all doubt.

All of which brings me to Melchior Meltis, the equally fabulous Director, who has been specialising in disasters—both historical and financial—most of his life.

It was Melchior who produced that super-colossal picture, *The Big Sink*, about the island in the South Seas that disappeared after a volcanic eruption.

This island was reconstructed on the lot of Havoc Prods. Inc. at the trifling cost of one million dollars (£250,000 before devaluation). It was battered by a studio-engineered tidal-wave (£50,000 worth) so effectively that it sank in 20 minutes 5 seconds dead.

It took a little longer than this to sink the backer, who was last seen selling shoelaces outside Grand Central Station. Melchior, who is possessed of an unsinkable, cork-like personality, however, rode the disaster with his usual ease and survived to boost the sale of a lot more shoelaces.

Naturally the subject of Atlantis is one that is very dear to his heart and he has been trying unsuccessfully for years to get it filmed—the epic of the South Sea island being regarded as just a curtain-raiser to get his hand in.

A couple of years ago the subject got as far as the top executive of a Hollywood studio. This gentleman turned it down eventually on the grounds that swimming pictures were no longer box-office and that he couldn't get Esther Williams on loan from her producers anyway.

When Atlantis got into the headlines again, Melchior, who had exhausted every avenue in Hollywood, decided to

promote the idea in this country. Now Melchior, living in a cloud-cuckoo land where slumps and financial crises pass him gently by, had no idea of the state of the British film industry, but he did manage to get an interview with a junior executive who, through a misunderstanding, thought he was there to discuss some other picture.

The interview, I understand, went something like this:

EXECUTIVE: Good morning, Mr. Meltis!

MELCHIOR: Goot mornink. Vat is dis? No carpet? You havink it cleaned?

EXECUTIVE: Not so loudly, Mr. Meltis, please! Our senior executives are rather touchy about the absence of a carpet.

MELCHIOR: Let us forget about the carpet and talk business.

EXECUTIVE: Now about this picture . . . We think it's a good idea. It's possible that a steamship company might put up the junior money for you. We, ourselves, would guarantee 70 per cent of your production costs, provided you brought the picture in on a budget of, say, £60,000—

MELCHIOR: £60,000! Are you expectink that I should sink a continent on a budget of £60,000?

EXECUTIVE: I beg your pardon, Mr. Meltis?

MELCHIOR: £60,000! Elephant feed!

EXECUTIVE: Elephant feed?

MELCHIOR: Dot is vat it cost to feed the elephants in my production of *Hannibal Goes West*. The whole picture cost four million dollars. My, vat a prestige job dot vos!

EXECUTIVE: Don't say the word "prestige" so loudly, please, Mr. Meltis. Our executives—

MELCHIOR: You are knowink the legend of Atlantis, of course? It vas a mothical continent—

EXECUTIVE: Mythical . . . What!! Did you say something about the sinking of Atlantis?

MELCHIOR: Naturally! Dot is vat I am here for, ain't it?

EXECUTIVE: There must be some mistake. I thought you were producing a film about a steamship company called *Transatlantic*.

MELCHIOR: You are wronk. I am here to discuss mit you the film based on the sinkink of Atlantis. My, vat a production! Vat a box-office sensation! Vat a disaster!

EXECUTIVE: Don't say that word so loudly! Our senior executives—

MELCHIOR: You have some ready-made islands in this country lyink around vat I could sink, maybe?

EXECUTIVE (mopping his forehead): Well, there's the Isle of Man—

MELCHIOR: Ah! Would it be easily sinkable?

EXECUTIVE (wildly): I don't know. We could ask the Governor.

MELCHIOR: Send him a telegram right away. Now about stars . . . ?

EXECUTIVE (very wildly): We might be able to borrow Margaret Lockwood . . .

MELCHIOR: Who is dis Margaret Lockwood? Never mind . . . It is all right mit me as long as she can swim. I do not believe in usink doubles.

EXECUTIVE (chewing his tie distractedly): I'll ask somebody.

MELCHIOR: Fine! Vat a picture you are goink to get . . . "*Thunderink* across the screens of the void, comes *Vaterlogged*, the biggest production of the age! Mit a cast of thousands! See the deluge vat wrecked a continent and the love of a man for a beautiful woman!!! See the biggest disaster in the history of the void from the safety of a comfortable seat!!!! You simply gotta see *Vaterlogged*!!!!!"

At this point the junior executive collapsed under his desk, jittering and foaming at the mouth. He was subsequently removed to a nursing home.

Melchior, at the moment, is besieging the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in search of a surplus island. He is reported to be unusually subdued in manner.

Which shows what a bureaucracy will do to the toughest constitution.

LYN LOCKWOOD.

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FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 5—THE NEWS REEL

Don't take the news reel for granted. Take it to pieces, and learn more about it. Although the smallest film made, it has the widest circulation of all. It is produced with remarkable speed in an industry noted for the slowness of production tempo. News reel technicians have the toughest of all jobs, and are both highly skilled and courageous. The cameramen have to film in all weathers—rain, snow, even fog. They cannot wait for blue skies. The organisation behind them is geared for speed. Special laboratories keep the way clear to develop and print all negatives without delay. If, sometimes, you see photography which is not up to standard, remember that nothing can be staged, or rehearsed, and that filming in any light is not very easy.

A news reel rarely runs for more than eight minutes, being around 700 feet in length. Into that brief period, three, four, and sometimes more subjects have to be packed. Occasionally, special longer features are included, but usually a sequence is 100-150 feet. Editors know just how to select and assemble scenes to present the highlights of a story, and cleverly suggest we are seeing a comprehensive survey, whereas little more than pictorial headlines are shown, for the time factor does not permit of detailed analysis. A great many regular filmmakers regard the news reel as a sort of animated interval. They watch it rather as they glance at the pages of an illustrated paper, rarely pausing to read or think. Sometimes a sequence arrests the attention. More often the reel passes in one eye and out of the other. News reels are criticised, both in and outside the industry. They are said to be monotonous; lacking in

originality, and so on. This is not entirely fair. They have to cover annual events, and intersperse them with current stories which can be covered in just over a minute each. When subjects are scarce, they may include items which are not news in a topical sense, but which assume a certain urgency by appearing with current items.

There are five news reel companies in this country, working on a rota basis when filming important personages, each in turn producing the interview or ceremony, and supplying duplicate negatives to the other four.

Is the news reel adequate? As commercial and programme space reasons compel it to remain short, it cannot be expected to do full justice to the stories it covers. Would it be better to plan longer, analytical reels to deal comprehensively with one or two subjects, than superficially with four or five? We are always being shown the *effect* of this or that occurrence, but never the *cause*.

Is the news reel impartial? It claims to be. It is not always successful. Each country's news reels are national in shape and viewpoint. There is no international screen news, transcending national and political barriers, nor is there any religious news reel addressed to mankind as a whole.

The news reel cannot claim to benefit humanity nor to contribute to world peace. Indeed, when harnessed to opposing belligerent nations, it becomes a ferocious and compelling propaganda weapon. Incidentally, propaganda is not allowed in the cinema, one is told. It *is* allowed, however, or maybe the word should be enforced when it is propa-

ganda to strengthen existing conditions in this, that, or any other country, in which case it is not regarded as propaganda, but "important information". It is the other kind of propaganda which is not allowed—the kind which seeks to tell the other half of the story. What people do not see or hear, they do not miss, of course!

By a combination of well-assembled visuals, and commentaries which go beyond what is seen, the news reel is capable of forming public opinion to a

surprising degree, and all who take films seriously should study the technical make-up of this little film with the big circulation. Naturally, the news reel is content to show us what is going on in the material world around us, but it would be a wonderful help to millions if sometimes it would remind them that *life is incomplete without the constant influence of the spiritual factor. That is the kind of news which is forever topical, yet so often overlooked.*

IF IT'S A GOOD FILM— SEE IT AGAIN!

By JOHN A. V. BURKE

Some weeks ago, at a lecture which I was giving, a man made the remark that only lunatics went more than once to see the same film. He was making an attempt to counter my assertion that cinema at its best is a true art form. He said that intelligent people went again and again to see a good play; they read the classics of literature over and over again, but "only a lunatic ever went to see a film again"! It is obvious that the answer to this curiously prejudiced attitude is that few people pay a second visit to a poor play or read again a second-rate novel and that it is the quality of the play or book that attracts, not the fact that it is a play or book. So with the cinema, granted that there is a greater proportion of films than plays, the number of films that are shoddy and worthless are bound to be greater too. But no one can truthfully deny that there have been many films of great beauty that have been seen again and again by persons of intelligence and discernment, films like *Nanook of the North*, *Louisiana Story*, *The Overlanders*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and others, to mention only those whose appeal is primarily pictorial. There are, of course, many others whose appeal is dramatic or religious that have been worthy of repeated visits, films like *Hamlet*,

Henry V, *Rembrandt*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Monsieur Vincent*, *Song of Bernadette*, *Open City*, *Brief Encounter*. It is idle to say that the content of such films can be absorbed in one viewing. It is pure philistinism to say that they are not worth another visit.

If it is prejudice on the part of the Philistines to think that no film is worth a second visit, it is economic lunacy on the part of the exhibitors to make it virtually impossible for a good film to be seen again. Yet that is the prevailing position. The distribution of films is geared to such a mechanical rhythm that unless you manage to see the film of your choice during the week or three days that it is in your neighbourhood, you have to all intents and purposes lost it. It is possible, of course, to travel to another district, but even then, such is the machine-like method in which films move round the circuits, you have only two weeks to make up your mind and arrange your evening appointments.

It is curious that exhibitors have not yet realised that there is a vast untapped audience waiting to be induced to see worthwhile films. This audience, consisting mainly of people over 35 years of age, have been so repulsed by memories of sub-human offerings in the cinemas over the past 29 years that it takes more

than two weeks to persuade them to risk another wasted evening in the company of the latest Hollywood heart-throb or Denham decadent. If there is merit in a film, reliable critics and friendly recommendation will eventually break down resistance, but by that time the film is beyond reach.

But there is another prejudice to be overcome before exhibitors can be made to revise their booking arrangements. It is the curious reaction on the part of many otherwise intelligent film-goers to what they call "old" films. They cannot bear to think that their neighbourhood gets the "latest" films too late. "Oh, that's an *old* film", is often the reaction to a suggestion that such and such a film is worth seeing.

If it is a good film it is worth seeing again. It does not matter whether the film was produced last season or last decade. If it was good, then it is good now and has much to offer for a second or third viewing. It is like listening to a gramophone record. You cannot absorb all there is to be heard and appreciated in one audition. So with a film. A film like *Henry V* or *They Were Not Divided* yields much pleasure and instruction the second or third time it is viewed.

As in the case of gramophone records, so too with films, there is such a thing as technical improvements in reproduction as the years go by, but there are not so many films nowadays that are all that much better, artistically and technically than some of the classics of the past. *Rembrandt*, for example, is a film that is a masterpiece which has been curiously

neglected even by the film societies. The acting of Charles Laughton is probably the best thing he ever did and the art direction and the scripting well above average with a really inspired use of lighting for camera-work. *Wuthering Heights*, *Rebecca*, *The Four Feathers*, *The Little Foxes*, *Jezebel*, are all films that I would willingly look at again.

However, what I am trying to suggest here is that the present system of circuit distribution is militating against the best interests of the cinema. The thoughtful audience will not be press-ganged by saccharine publicity into seeing a film. The moronic types will go to see anything. But even the number of morons is apparently dwindling sufficiently now-a-days to make the exhibitors look a bit worried. It is only commonsense that the films which have already cost so much money should be allowed to reap some more by judicious distribution, based on the intrinsic worth of the film. Repertory cinemas in each town may be the answer. Best of all, the realisation at the production end that adult films will eventually bring out adult audiences. The adolescents will presumably grow-up one day and in the meantime, Children's Entertainment Films are catering for intelligent children.

But the present audiences have a job of work to do. They must tell their cinema-merchants what they want and whether they want it again or not. So much, in the last analysis, depends on the people who pay to see the pictures. If only they would wake up to their responsibility and opportunities!

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FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Starring: Basil Radford, Bernard Miles, Niall MacGuinness.

Producer and Director: Bernard Miles. **Distributors:** British Lion.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

Running time: 89 minutes.

Exasperated by the unco-operative-ness of his workers, the owner and managing director of an engineering works (Basil Radford) suggests that they run it themselves. His outburst is taken literally and the film portrays the result.

My ignorance of industrial matters can be gauged by the fact that on returning home I had to get a dictionary and look up the word "ratchet", much bandied about early in the picture. And economics have always struck me as important rather than comprehensible. So perhaps I am wrong in thinking that the problems posed by this film may be a little oversimplified. The conclusion is that the owner, for all his old school tie, is a pretty good sort after all and that though he has something to learn from the workers, they have quite a lot to learn from him. Everybody ends up happily, even the Communist agitator (his political affiliation is unmistakably indicated rather than explicitly stated) eventually learns to laugh at himself.

When I heard that this picture had been "pushed" by the government, I wondered if it was going to advocate nationalisation. But no. If it is propaganda for anything, it is for increased production. That's O.K. by me. We can't produce too much. Or can we? I wouldn't know. That's economics.

Q.

ONE WAY STREET

Starring: James Mason, Marta Toren and Dan Duryea, with William Condra and Basil Ruysdael. A Universal-International Picture. **Director:** Hugo Fregonese. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 75 minutes approx.

Here is a film with many entertaining qualities; an unusual variation of the theme of the crooked doctor's rehabilitation, credible dialogue, beautiful Mexican scenery, a plot suitably varied by suspense and romance and competent acting and direction. Yet it is marred on the one hand by unconvincing character development and on the other by the fatalism which it preaches. The conversion of the doctor from gangster to humanitarian, albeit rather sudden, is welcome. All the more pity, therefore, to suggest that the fates reck nought of morals. True, the film could as easily be used as a sermon to teach the urgency of conversion, "for ye know not the day nor the hour".

There are some interesting characters including a priest (it is doubtful whether he is intended to be a Mexican or not, but his garb reminds one of Henry Fonda in *The Fugitive*) who helps in the conversion, and a little Mexican boy, unnamed, who shows great ability.

James Mason, I thought, had more opportunity for acting than has come his way for a long time. It is hardly his fault that the doctor was so lacking in probability. Marta Toren is a suitable foil to Mason and Dan Duryea rather less objectionable than such characters usually allow him to be.

V.

RETOUR A LA VIE

(Return To Life)

Starring: Louis Juvet, Patricia Roc, Bernard Blier, Noel-Noel and Serge Reggiani **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd. **Directors:** H. G. Clouzot, Georges Lampin, Andre Cayatte and Jean Dreyville. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 120 minutes.

World War One was ten years ended before the debunking literature began to appear. *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Journey's End* were among the most discussed pieces of the early thirties. World War Two is not so long buried before the cinema produces examinations of motives and characters, ideologies and movements calculated to make us feel that the cataclysmic upheaval which we so recently experienced was more than usually unnecessary. The Germans have given us *Ballad of Berlin*, in which we see the unaccustomed and healthy sight of Germans laughing at themselves, though I grant the laughter is somewhat wry. Italy, with *Vivere in Pace* and *Angelina*, have shown us that the dupes of Mussolini are learning the hard way to social sanity. Now France comes along with a document which preaches tolerance and patience and humility and the evident need of

brotherhood among men if civilisation is to remain.

It is particularly pleasing to have a French film which preaches the need of tolerance towards Germans for France, of all nations has most bitterly suffered from the excessive militarism of her northern neighbour. *Retour a La Vie* is not only a good sermon, it is also well composed. The five episodes which make it up are, inevitably, of unequal quality, but each in its turn and in its own way contributes something to the total theme of the film. Each one, even the least satisfactory (and that is largely a matter of taste) is well above the average in good French film technique.

The first and the last deal with the impact upon the conscience of Frenchmen, of a liberation which places Germans in their power. Louis Juvet, as a cripple who finds a wounded Nazi in his hands, and Serge Reggiani, as a returned prisoner who brings a German girl-wife to his village, represent the opposite poles of national bitterness and national tolerance. Both are powerful arguments in their separate ways, but the first falls into the trap (perhaps excusable under the stress of the occasion) of making the Frenchmen give the Nazi an overdose of morphia to prevent him further suffering at the hands of the "liberating" Maquis.

The link between the five pieces is that the chief character in each is a prisoner-of-war returned from Germany. The most cynical, and for me the most pleasing, is the episode in which Noel-Noel is received by a delegation at the Gare D'Orsay and made the recipient of a speech and a statuette as a result of being the 1,500,000th prisoner to return. But he finds his home occupied by strangers, his girl gone off with somebody else, his performing dogs having forgotten their tricks and his treasures destroyed. Nevertheless he learns that life must begin again and he sets off with a bouquet and great hope to find romance and a new home.

The remaining two episodes mark the extremes of the macabre and the light-hearted. In one, a family squabbles as to who is to tell Aunt Emma that while she was in Dachau, her name was forged in order to secure her share of an inheritance, the while she lies corpse-like and uncaring in the next room. In the other, a returned barman



ernard (Leo Lapara) tells the disabled Girard (Louis Juvet) that he is pushing his dislike of the post-war world too far . . .

finds himself called upon to pretend to make love to a company of jaded W.A.C.s.

This film abounds in technical felicities in the best French tradition. I will select two: rare examples of symbolism used in film: one is where a flock of geese follows after a chattering delegation of outraged villagers; the second, a most happy

composition in which a water-sodden jacket drips its tattoo of reconciliation on to a drum which has recently been used to express hatred. Two masterly touches. There is no room to do full justice to a first-class French film. I have no hesitation in calling it a basically religious piece which any adult would do well to see and ponder. V.

Prelude to Fame

Starring: Guy Rolfe, Kathleen Byron and Kathleen Ryan, with Jeremy Spenser. A Two Cities Film.

Director: Fergus McDonell.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

Running time: 88 minutes.

The burst of applause that punctuated the Press Show of *Prelude To Fame* was not directed at the film. Seldom have I sat through a more tediously unconvincing script or listened to less intelligent dialogue, or watched adults on the screen who seemed so weary of their existence. The applause was a

tribute to the inspired and sensitive acting of a little boy of twelve, who succeeded in convincing us that he both understood the music he was conducting and had the orchestra that played it under his control. Jeremy Spenser is another of those talented youngsters with which the British studios abound. If only the Screenwriters, Directors and adult players were half as capable and conscientious.

The cameraman and the editor deserve credit for beautiful photography neatly assembled, though some of the cutting was so sharp as to suggest some extravagant discarding of takes.

The story of the little Italian boy with an astonishing gift for musical analysis plus a prodigious memory, who is adopted by an ambitious and

John
gives
lessons
to
Guido



unscrupulous Englishwoman, anxious to be known as a patron of music has now provoked three films. The French version has had to change its title owing to similarity to the British film. With the little Italian prodigy, Pierino, playing his real life rôle, it would make an interesting comparison with Jeremy's performance. I fear that one's credibility in such youthful maestros must be diminished by the very fact that Jeremy could so easily simulate genius! The third version, with Bobby Henrey as the child conductor, seems now to have been shelved. This, too, would provide an interesting comparison. It is my view that Jeremy is the better actor for Bobby, in *Fallen Idol*, had Carol Reed to direct him.

The Italian characters and dialogue were pitifully inadequate. All with B.B.C. accents. But the sentimentality of the story, in addition to the pathos, and perfection of Jeremy Spenser is almost certain to win this film box-office distinction. The child has a curious resemblance to Orson Welles. Alas, when he was conducting his orchestra, I could not help thinking of Orson weaving his hypnotic spells in *Black Magic*!

V.

ON THE TOWN

Starring: Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra. **Directors:** Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. **Producer:** Arthur Freed. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

Even if you don't like musicals, this is really a very good one, splashed vigorously about New York in the wake of the U.S. Navy in the persons of Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Jules Mursshin let loose for a day. Their pursuit of girlish youth and beauty narrows down to a search for Miss Turnstiles, so named for the month by the City Underground and portrayed by Vera Ellen. With the aid of an amorous taxi driver, Betty Garnett, and a very photogenic anthropologist, Anne Miller, they are eventually all united on top of the town via the Empire State Building. Their journey there is via such unlikely places as the Natural History Museum, which their passage somewhat enlivens.

Naturally, the story is interspersed with much song and dance of all descriptions, including some interesting ballet sequences in the modern surrealist style. The old-fashioned leg-show stuff gets little respect from this film, as every time a chorus appears, they inform us they are about to depart, and do so. It was a pity the fruity-voiced docker who opens and ends the nonsense of the day had no further part in the proceedings. Good entertainment for most people.

P. P. F.

SOUTH OF ST. LOUIS

Starring: Joel McCrea, Alexis Smith, Zachary Scott, Dorothy Malone. **Director:** Ray Enwright. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

I always enjoy a Western film with cowboys and the open prairie and the bad men. The cowboy and his life make a romantic appeal to all of us, although, no doubt, his life is far from being such as the cinema portrays.

This film unfortunately is not cowboys and bad men, pure and simple. It is set in Texas at the time of the American Civil War and so gets all mixed up with soldiers and guerillas and espionage. This immediately put the cowboys out of their traditional setting, and when they got mixed up in gun-running it was the end for me.

The story was hopelessly complicated and its geography was as difficult to follow as the plot. Everyone seemed to go without let or hindrance from a town held by Federal troops to one held by Union troops, and there seemed to be nothing easier than to smuggle guns from Mexico into Texas in large wagon loads. The whole film is like that, unreal, stilted and artificial, far too complicated to follow, without a running commentary, and very long drawn out. The only thing which livened it up for a few minutes was the introduction of a Lancashire cotton merchant complete with authentic accent. This was so startling in a film set in Texas that it did rouse some interest, but we were soon back with intrigue and gun-running and civil wars, broken friendships, and very very complicated geography.

P. P. F.



Operating
Marlowe
confronts
Stepanek
(Jock Ha
of 1



STATE

Trapped in a
refuge hut high up
in the mountains
of Vosnia's Police
State, John
Marlowe and Lisa
(Glynis Johns)
come face to face
with their captors.

urgeon, Dr.
as Fairbanks)
Revo (Karel
Col. Galcon
with exposure
implicity

ves from the Dictator
State of Vosnia

SECRET



Starring: Douglas Fairbanks, junior,
Glynis Johns, Jock Hawkins.

Producers: Frank Saunder and
Sidney Gilliat. *Certificate:* U.

Running time: 104 minutes.

Films of violence are only too prevalent in our day, and the well-known American type gangster film, with its tough-guys, its killings, brutality and violence, is only too commonplace. That is why it is so refreshing to see a film such as this, for here we have a masterly production, which has one hundred times the suspense of a cheap gangster film, and yet contains no violence. That, of course, is where the whole success of the film lies. I cannot remember seeing a film in which the suspense is

so well maintained, and maintained almost to the final fade-out. The whole time there is the threat and suggestion of imminent violence, and yet we never see violence on the screen. Nor yet does the film consist of a series of monotonous narrow escapes from well-nigh impossible situations. It flows smoothly, logically and swiftly to its final climax.

Perhaps, however, a word about the film itself. It takes place in an imaginary Police State, such as is all too familiar to us today. An English doctor (Douglas Fairbanks) is asked to go there to demonstrate his surgical skill, which he does. He finds to his horror that the person on whom he is operating is the dictator, who shortly after dies. Because of this he is not allowed to leave the country and is threatened with liquidation. The rest

of the film is then concerned with his attempts to escape, aided by Glynis Johns, who plays the part of a variety actress in a music hall.

greatest use has been made of natural settings, all of which add to the air of suspense and reality.

If you want a thrilling film which



"Do you recognise this wallet?"

The story is simple, but one feels all the time that it is so true to life. There is not a single character in the film whom one can criticise adversely. Everyone plays his part magnificently. The camera work is very fine, and the

combines good acting and good direction, this is one to which you should go. It has also its moments of subtle humour which go to make this one of the finest films I have seen for a long while.

P. P. F.

HOLY YEAR

Produced by Associated British-Pathé.

Commentator: Wilfrid Pickles.

Certificate: U. **Category:** C.

Running time: 18 minutes.

Associated British - Pathe have established a reputation for the imaginative use of news-reel stock in the form of historical cavalcades. We remember *The Peaceful Years*, which commented upon the political and other happenings in the years between the wars. Now they have applied the same method to give us a tribute to Holy Year. With scenes drawn from the Coronation of Pius XII,

the Consistories, Beatifications, the inauguration of the Holy Year and other Papal occasions, they have linked reports from other countries, notably the Holy Places in Palestine, Lourdes and pilgrimage centres in Austria to make a most welcome contribution to the list of films which deal sympathetically with the efforts which the Church is making in its own best way to the cause of true peace. A thoughtful commentary is admirably spoken by Wilfrid Pickles. This is a little film for which we say "thank you" to the producers and which, I hope, will be suitably welcomed around the country.

V.

LAST HOLIDAY

Starring: Alec Guinness, Beatrice Campbell and Kay Walsh, with Bernard Lee, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Muriel George and Helen Cherry. A Watergate Production, distributed by A.B.P.C. Ltd.
Director: Henry Cass. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 89 minutes.

It is some time since J. B. Priestley treated us to one of his film sermons. Like G. B. Shaw, he uses the stage (and the screen) as a pulpit. Like G.B.S. he has a knack of creating characters, but he does not seem always successful in bringing them together in dramatic unity. Each of them stands out as a vignette, pleasing and clever in itself, but bearing little essential relation to each other or to the plot in which they are conceived.



Sheila (Beatrice Campbell) has reason for courting George Bird (Alec Guinness)

In *Last Holiday* he uses the idea of a young man given a few weeks to live who decides to have a really good time at a fashionable sea-side hotel, as the peg on which to hang criticisms of social conditions, class distinctions, the parliamentary system and morality in general. But he does not give us much hope for the future. His Utopias are all in the clouds. In fact, one feels that there is not much to be said against a good dose of old-fashioned Christianity, if only somebody would have the courage to say so!

Alec Guinness is master of himself as the young man. For once we are allowed to see him as he is, and the sight is quite pleasing. Beatrice Campbell, in her most important part so far, plays well but one feels that neither the camera nor the Director have quite got the measure of this intelligent actress. A galaxy of hand-picked "characters" (as distinct from "character actors") make this a sure success for the puppet-show which Priestley has assembled. There are obvious exceptions: Wilfrid Hyde-White, Bernard Lee, Esme Cannon; these are artists who can play any rôle convincingly.

Last Holiday is, then, a film which is worth watching both for what Priestley says (though you need not agree with it) as for the way he says it. The final fatalistic twist to the story seems a little unnecessary, but has its point.

V.

THE RELUCTANT WIDOW

Starring: Jean Kent, Guy Rolfe and Julian Dallas, with Paul Dupuis, Kathleen Bryon and Jean Caddell. A Two Cities Film.
Director: Bernard Knowles.
Certificate: A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 87 minutes.

An apparently well-bred governess is not above marrying a man on his death-bed in order to prevent his brother inheriting. In addition to a house infected with sliding doors, secret panels, mysterious strangers who prowl the midnight hours and creepy knock-knacks of all kinds, she also inherits a Secret Document which, if it fell into the hands of Napoleon, would mean incalculable harm to Britain. Most of the film time is spent by various characters hunting the document. Needless to say, Britain is saved and all ends well after the usual trimmings have been experienced. A sword duel between Guy Rolfe and Julian Dallas (an interesting and talented newcomer) is more than average good. Jean Kent proves once again that she *could* act if only she had the chance. She does not get it here. Still, this is a film for those who, as one Trade Paper expresses it "seek action and romance without subtlety".

NO MAN OF HER OWN

Starring: Barbara Stanwyck, John Lund, with Jane Cowl, Phyllis Thaxter, Lyle Bettger, Henry O'Neill. **Producer:** Richard Maibaum. **Director:** Mitchell Leiser. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 97 minutes.

Expectant but unmarried mother Helen Ferguson makes friends on the train with also expectant Patrice Harkness and her husband. Patrice puts her wedding ring on Helen's finger in case it might go down the drain. At this moment the coach turns upside down. Result of an accident, I fancy. Mrs. Harkness? She died. Mr. Harkness? He died. Miss Ferguson? Not a hope, brother; she is Barbara Stanwyck and she gets off with a Caesarian operation (all the rage on the films now).

The wedding ring has names in it. So everybody, including the Harkness parents, who have never seen even a photo of Patrice, assume that Helen is she. Even when she absentmindedly writes her real name and says she has never before heard her supposed husband's favourite tune, that doesn't shake them, so Helen hasn't the heart to disillusion them, though she hates taking their money. As they have plenty, it comes in handy all the same when the real father of her baby turns up and starts blackmail. He is as nasty a piece of work as could be and has a mistress who isn't given a name in the cast, but is just called Blonde, with a capital B. So many people want to murder him that when he does get murdered the criminal takes a bit of sorting out. But to save unpleasantness Bill Harkness, the other son, drops the body from a railway bridge on to a train. We do not see, but are told that in the course of this proceeding the head came off. ("Wather gwuesome.") But Bill is a nice guy and he marries Helen and they live happily ever after.

Actually the film is not quite as silly as it sounds. It has touches of tenderness and of character, but these are somewhat stereotyped.

Q.

GUILT IS MY SHADOW

Starring: Patrick Holt, Elizabeth Sellars, Lana Morris and Peter Reynolds. An Associated British-Pathé Film. **Director:** Roy Kellino. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

In these days of film depression it is a welcome sign to see new teams of technicians getting together to write and direct native efforts. Roy Kellino and Ivan Foxwell between them wrote, produced and directed *Guilt Is My Shadow*. I wish I could say that the result was entirely satisfactory. It has many merits: a simple story, exterior locations making use of the beauties of Devon scenery, new and interesting players and a moral sincerity which is altogether praiseworthy in view of the watering-down of ethical standards which is customary in so many modern films.

The weaknesses seem to me to be mainly two: with the exception of Peter Reynolds and Elizabeth Sellars, the players do not bring life to their characters; the director would appear to have been unable to bring any enthusiasm to bear upon a useful script. It lumbers along from one sequence to another, as though they had no vital connection born of the story they are telling.

The story is not without plausibility. A young wastrel on the run from the London police comes to his uncle's Devon farm, where he soon wearies of country life and talks himself into a job as a mechanic at the village garage. His deserted wife joins him and his uncle gives shelter to both. The uncle discovers that the wife is a decent, faithful partner to a worthless husband and when, in self-defence, she kills the husband, he conceals the crime. But conscience and the arrival of the dead man's mother precipitate a denouement which is satisfactory if over-melodramatic.

The film is worth a visit if only for the sake of watching Peter Reynolds. With proper handling, he could be a very useful dramatic actor. Elizabeth Sellars does not quite live up to the promise she gave in *Floodtide*, but that, I think, is mainly the fault of the director.

V.

CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR

Starring: Ronald Colman, Celeste Holm, Vincent Price, Art Linkletter, Barbara Britton. **Producer:** George Moskov. **Director:** Richard Wharf. Released through United Artists. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

I think you will enjoy this farce, despite the fact that it sags a little in the middle like a well fed dachshund.

Ronald Colman is a genius, a walking encyclopaedia. He enters a quiz programme sponsored by Vincent Price to boost his brand of soap. Ronald refuses to accept his winnings. Instead he insists upon appearing again on subsequent weeks on the understanding of doubling the stake or losing all. This procedure captures the interest of the public, so that as week by week the stake mounts ever higher, the sale of the soap likewise soars. Vincent in the end finds himself in a terrible dilemma.

Ronald Colman plays his part with easy assurance, and Vincent Price scores a notable hit. In a comedy of this sort the clowns most engage our attention and so the women are overshadowed. Caesar, by the way, is a parrot, quite unnecessary to the theme, I thought, but what does it matter?

T.

AMBUSH

Starring: Robert Taylor, John Hodiak and Arlene Dahl, with Don Taylor and Jean Hagen. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Director:** Sam Wood. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

The drum roll that announces this film, mingled with the roar of the M.-G.-M. lion really tells us all we need to know about it. When the visuals began to show corpses and a departing posse of Apache Indians, I was quite hopeful that we were to see something different. But then the credit titles began to creep over the screen and I knew we were in for the mixture as before. *Ambush* is a pedestrian yarn about stuffed shirt professional soldiers fighting Indians

who have escaped from their Reservation and are ravaging the territory. The civilian scouts help the soldiers to track down the Indians; there is lots of whooping and fighting and tracking and love-making in between whiles, and the ladies get the men they really love, because the others are conveniently killed off in time. Robert Taylor looked rather nice in a beard for the first ten minutes, but then his fans demanded that he appear stream-lined, which was not half so convincing. John Hodiak and the others ride like anything and the scenery, as is usual with Westerns is magnificent and makes up for a lot that is lacking otherwise.

V.

JOUR DE FETE

Starring: Jacques Tati, with René Wheeler, Guy Decomble, Paul Frankeur, Santa Relli, Maine Vallée, Rafal, Beauvais, Delcasson. A Fred Orain Production. **Director:** Jacques Tati. **Distributors:** Films de France. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 100 minutes approx.

Ici on parle français, but it is the universal language of laughter which prevails. English sub-titling is there in discreet moderation, but a generation which can understand the comic strip can surely follow *Jour de Fête* without language intervening.

Tati, something like General de Gaul, something like Charlie Chaplin, plays the part of a tall, gangling village postman, whose solemn seriousness and rudimentary cunning survive the fast moving series of misadventures which bring laughter past boiling point. After helping in the erection of the showmen's booths for the fair in the village, he gets a peep at an American film glorifying the U.S.A. postal service. The greater part of *Jour de Fête* shows our village postman with his double jointed bicycle taking up the challenge to emulate and, indeed, to surpass American efficiency in postal delivery.

It is not just up-to-date Keystone Comedy. The laughter is not just from the so called stomach. The farce has its satirical touches which flash dancing gleams of delight to the intellect.

X.

THE CAPTURE

Starring: Lew Ayres and Teresa Wright, with Victor Jory, Jacqueline White, Jimmy Hunt, and introducing Edwin Rand. **Writer and Producer:** Niven Busch. **Director:** John Sturges. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio Pictures, Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

A fugitive, exhausted and wounded in the arm, lands up at Fr. Gomez'. Fr. Gomez is not easy to put into a category. He is neither the ever so cute, big brother type of priest, nor is he of the gentle shepherd variety—the main choice that seems to lie before the men of Hollywood. So uncharacterised and impersonal is he that it is obvious that a priest fits in here as the convenient listening-in device for the elaboration of flashbacks to show us how an American manager of an oil refinery in Mexico can, within a year, come to be the hunted man that he is.

The real bad man of the story is obvious immediately we catch sight of his jolly, consequential entry. But it takes about an hour before our suspicions are confirmed. The hero-fugitive had come to share our suspicions, but it is rather a "hunch". He has little more evidence than we had fifty minutes earlier.

The nemesis: theme is well conceived and maintained. If you are really a good man you should think before you shoot in case the man you've got covered is so wounded already that he really can't raise an arm. Or else you may regret it as Lin Vanner (Lew Ayres) does.

One small point: in the course of the flashback Lin marries the widow of the man he'd shot. As the scene is laid in Mexico, the wedding takes place in a Catholic church, before a native priest for whom the Latin is said very well, but, beaming all over, he leans over the altar rail and gives the happy pair a real good North American fraternity handshake. Not quite our mode, I thought.

A good supporting picture with some delightful photography. X.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE

Starring: Barbara Stanwyck, James Mason. **Director:** Mervyn Le Roy. **Producer:** Voldemar Vetluguin. **Certificate:** A. **Running time:** 108 minutes.

I was quite looking forward to seeing this film with James Mason, as his performances have been above the average in some films. But this one was a great disappointment. Barbara Stanwyck plays her part well as the wife of an unfaithful husband. But James Mason's part of the unfaithful husband could have been played by any amateur. Probably the story itself was responsible for this, since it is an unsavoury and immoral story of unfaithfulness, the answer to which is divorce, culminating in murder done solely out of jealousy, the whole judiciously flavoured with scenes of American high life in very expensive bars, where men with lots of money play with very expensive women.

The whole film left a rather nasty taste in the mouth, for which its low moral standards were quite obviously responsible. The only thing which gave it any uplift at all was the fact that the wife is not unfaithful to her husband, even though there is every opportunity and, so the film would teach us, every excuse. But even so, one is left with the sneaking suspicion at the end of the film, when she leaves her husband, that she is going straight off to set up another little home for two. I would not recommend this film in any respect to anyone, and perhaps enough said.

P. P. F.

THE BALLAD OF BERLIN

Starring: Gert Frobe, Aribert Wascher, Tatjana Sais, Ute Seilish. **Director:** Robert A. Stemmle. **Distributors:** London Films. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

This is the story of Otto Nobody, the German equivalent of Strube's little man. He returns to bombed Berlin after what seems to have been for him an unhappy and involuntary war, to find that, while others can make shift

to live, he cannot. There he is, starved and miserable, bartering his salvaged pre-war glories for the miserable rations that go to those who know only the white market.

The story is not a tragedy so much as a great deal of cynical fun about tragedy. Conventions, opportunists, black marketeers, militarists, civil servants, down-at-heel limitations of café society — all find their way, humorously enough, into the adventures of the bewildered Otto. He gets the worst of an argument with two arm-chair strategists planning the next war and wakes to find himself firmly nailed down in his coffin. Ersatz may kill, but it cannot bury. The doctor was too underfed and hurried to diagnose properly and the undertaker's limitations leave Otto on the floor while the mourners depart with the superstructure of his coffin to the cemetery.

The happy solution solves very little but makes one or two suggestions which, I fear, most people will have heard before. A great deal of symbolism and dream life is employed to help things out, but there is little of the subtlety normal in American, British or other Continental studios. There is much good fun in the film and good photography, but the moral points are underscored too heavily for our tastes. It is a pity that Otto's loneliness and need for a happy marriage should be translated almost exclusively into terms of sex.

J. C.

THE DIVIDING LINE

Starring: Macdonald Carey and Gail Russell. **Director:** Joseph Losey. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 83 minutes.

If it is a fair test of the worth of a film by asking how much will be remembered a month after you have seen it, then, I fear, this film will not pass the dividing line between the average and the outstanding. But that is not to say that the film does not interest you at the time, or that it lacks exciting moments—there are plenty of these. Nor is it to say that the photography fails because some shots are exceptionally fine, especially those of the chase. The acting, too, is

consistently good, with special credit to Lalo Rios, who takes the part of an irresponsible youth of Spanish origin.

This is a film with a message. Just as *Pinkeey* showed up the unjust treatment of the coloured people in the States, so this film reveals how, in a small American town, the poor peasant Spanish population is deprived of justice through the prejudice of the so-called "better" classes.

By the way; I could not help wondering why the hooligan wreckers of the newspaper offices, who did their work with utmost thoroughness, should have overlooked the manager's department and have left it intact. Perhaps it was because those managerial surroundings were just the sort of background for a little love scene between Macdonald Carey and Gail Russell.

G.

THE STRATTON STORY

Starring: James Stewart and June Allyson, with Frank Morgan and Agnes Moorhead. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Director:** Sam Wood. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 100 minutes.

A simple story told in the way Hollywood knows so well how, about the country boy with dreams of top-ranking base-ball who meets the one-timer, who teaches him all he knows and then watches his pupil make the grade to the top. Meantime he has married a sweet little girl who gives him confidence as well as first-class



A happy family

cookies and who cheers him to victory as well as mending his clothes. When he loses his leg in an accident, it is she who leaves their baby to teach him how to walk again. A clean, unpretentious, neatly-made film with adequate performances from all concerned. Whether one would get more fun if one understood baseball, I cannot say. To judge by the expression on June Allyson's face, I guess I missed something!

V.

PAPER CHAIN

Produced by G.B.I. for Wiggins Teape & Co., Ltd. Running time: 20 minutes.

This film seems longer than it is because so much is packed into its two reels. The whole process of the conversion of rags or wood pulp into paper is shown as it is carried out today in the mills of Wiggins Teape

and Co., who have been making paper since 1761. The film is both entertaining and informative. The opening sequences, depicting a paperless world in which the father of a family sits at the breakfast table reading the latest news summary off an engraved stone tablet, whilst stone "letters" are dropped through the letter-box with a resounding crash, are most amusing and arouse fascinating speculations as to how our bureaucrats would have contrived to run such a world. The serious business of depicting the varied and complicated processes of paper-making, which is the film's main concern, is done in such a way as to make the various stages of production comprehensible to the audience, and the film never lapses into dullness. Designed primarily for sales propaganda, *Paper Chain* will be of interest to all (and they must be legion) who have ever wondered how paper is made.

M. M.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full reviews when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III, Nos. 4 and 5)

<i>Adam's Rib</i>	(A) (107)
<i>Africa Screams</i>	(C) (114)
<i>All The King's Men</i>	(B) (147)
<i>Always Leave Them Laughing</i>	(A) (149)
<i>Appointment With Danger</i>	(B) (139)
<i>Bagdad</i>	(B) (109)
<i>Battleground</i>	(A) (114)
<i>Beautiful Blonde From Bashful Bend, The</i>	(A) (149)
<i>Big Wheel, The</i>	(B) (140)
<i>Bitter Rice</i>	(A) (109)
<i>Black Magic</i>	(B) (149)
<i>Bride For Sale</i>	(B) (146)
<i>Bride of the Ford</i>	(B) (148)
<i>Chain Lightning</i>	(D) (115)
<i>Dancing in the Dark</i>	(B) (139)
<i>Dancing Years, The</i>	(B) (150)
<i>Happiest Days of your Life, The</i>	(A) (108)

<i>Inspector General, The</i>	(C) (142)
<i>Les Parents Terribles</i>	(A) (150)
<i>Long is the Road</i>	(106)
<i>Moonrise</i>	(A) (148)
<i>Morning Departure</i>	(B) (110)
<i>Oh, You Beautiful Doll</i>	(B) (146)
<i>Out of the Darkness</i>	(C) (115)
<i>Outpost in Morocco</i>	(B) (147)
<i>Red Danube, The</i>	(A) (112)
<i>Riding High</i>	(C) (107)
<i>Should Parents Tell?</i>	(A) (146)
<i>Stars in My Crown</i>	(C) (139)
<i>Three Came Home</i>	(A) (108)
<i>They Were Not Divided</i>	(B) (144)
<i>Under My Skin</i>	(A) (141)
<i>When Willie Comes Marching Home</i>	(C) (107)
<i>Young Man of Music</i>	(A) (140)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Come to the Stable</i>	(C) (12)
<i>It's a Great Feeling.</i>	(B) (85)
<i>Johnny Belinda</i>	(A) (42)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Rachel and the Stranger</i>	(B) (70)
<i>Scott of the Antarctic</i>	(B) (14)
<i>Snake Pit, The</i>	(A) (159)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B) (80)
<i>The Search</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

Crying For The Moon

By JOHN-BAPTIST REEVES, O.P.

Am I asking the film-makers for something that they cannot or should not give?

Let me tell you what I want so that you may tell me whether I should or should not want it. Or if it is a lawful thing to desire, tell me why I never get it.

I want the films to revive for me, as I believe only films can, a pleasure that I enjoyed in childhood and can rarely recapture now : a pleasure so exquisite, so ecstatic, that to ask for more—as I did then, and do still—is asking for heaven itself and nothing less. I want the films to help me to see visions, to dream really delightful dreams : to show me things that my bodily eye has never seen, and—if they must add sound—to let me hear music and voices such as my physical ear has never heard. I want to see new *kinds* of things and hear new *kinds* of sounds : the kind of things that come to you in your brightest dreams, and have not yet come to me in mine.

Surely our dream-worlds, our fairy-lands, are quite different, not merely from the common every-day world, but from one another's. If you asked me to make a film for you, which would you thank me for more : things that anybody can see in plain daylight, or things that I cannot point to because I only see them in dark, dark rooms, or when my eyes are tight closed?

Oh, I know that films have other uses : they can show us real things as we can never see them. I know all about nature films and travel films, and I am more thankful for them than I can say. But they are best when they are serious. They are part of one's education. But who wants to be educated all day long, and all night too? We all want entertainment, and lots of it. We all need lots of it. It is the one thing the film-makers seem most anxious to give us. But for me at any rate, most of their efforts are an awful flop. *They nearly all seem to forget that the place for seeing films is a dark room.*

You would think that most film-makers when they were very young, were afraid of the dark. And their foolish nurses calmed them by flattery, telling them that this was because they were so sensitive and had so much imagination : taught them to pray to the good Lord to deliver them from the creepy and crawly things that go plop in the dark. The poor spoilt darlings never had the marvellous story of Genesis explained to them, so that their creative genius was starved at birth. The very first thing in creation is darkness. The good Lord, the original Creator, Who made us all to be creators after His image and likeness chose darkness as the perfect stage for the revelation of His greatest wonder, Light. Surely that is a tip worth more than a gold mine to the film-makers.

Too much imagination! Too sensitive! What rubbish! Have you never heard about the old Irish bards, and how they cultivated the genius of the most imaginative and sensitive people the world has ever known? They locked themselves and their young pupils in pitch-dark cells for weeks on end, and never came out until they had conceived those "Visions" that are amongst the greatest wonders of the ancient world. You may say that since then the sensitive imagination of the Irish people has run away with them. But you must not say that they have been unhappy in the realms of laughter and tears into which their fancy has led them : the fantastic realm of faerie, and the infinitely more fantastic kingdom of Jesus Christ—more fantastic because it is not of this world, but more real than anything in this world. Unless you go into the dark to discover all the possible worlds that can be born there you will never discover where this world stands in the hierarchy of worlds real and unreal, of God's creation and your own. You must create world after world of your own otherwise you will never learn to appreciate the wonders of God's world. You will be in it, and not of it. As a definition of hell that

is good enough for the most fastidious theologian. It explains why there is so much that is hellish in the cinema. Too little imagination. Too little appreciation of the dark and of the wondrous world of light that can come to life only in the dark. A light that never shone on sea or land until search-lights and night-bombing became fashionable.

(God help us.) I am quite willing to discuss films with you as "a new medium of artistic expression", but only as long as you stick to the notion of artificial and fantastic light conjured out of artificial and fantastic darkness. That notion is elemental, fundamental.

(Reprint from an early edition of
"Catholic Film News")

MORE RELIGIOUS AND GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

Dawn Trust, Ltd., Aylesbury, Bucks.

Editions Lumina, 5 rue Férou, Paris, VIe.

Editions du Berger, 4 rue Cassette, Paris, VIe.

Common Ground, Ltd., Sydney Place, S.W.7.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Ltd.,
Britannica Films Division, 211
Piccadilly, London, W.1.

E. DAWN TRUST GEMSTRIPS

In earlier issues of *Focus*, articles from this panel devoted to the teaching of Religion have drawn attention to various Dawn Trust Film Strips (see July, 1948, and March, 1949). Within the last year Dawn Trust have experimented with a new line which they call "Gemstrips"—designed to serve two purposes, viz., individual use by children by means of a small patent device called by the unattractive name of "Dawnstrip Viewer", and for use in projectors, especially with very young children. Each gemstrip consists of 12 pictures, selected to give the essentials of the story, and generally taken from the full length strips. They are intended, in the words of the advertisement, "to leave the Teacher complete scope for telling these well known stories". This invitation to literary license of interpretation of the Bible

text seems to the reviewer to underline a fundamental weakness which in over emphasising feeling and imagination would appeal to a sympathy where objective fact merges too easily with fancy's play. However, in the hands of the right teacher any such danger could be successfully overcome, and is more apparent in some strips than others. Some of the titles are: *Christmas with the Holy Family*; *A Boy is Cured*; *The Prodigal Story*; *Great Events*; and a set of seven strips with one viewer can be purchased for £1.

F. TWO STRIPS FROM COMMON GROUND

(a) *The Spread of Christianity*, Pt. I, CGA/B 497.

(b) *Lives of Great Christians Series*: Albert Schweitzer, CGA/B 295.

(a) a series of six strips covers Christian History from the 1st to the 20th century. Although the series contains interesting and rare material brought together by a professor of Glasgow University and is masterly in its use of sketch maps, it would probably not commend itself to Catholic teachers; but Part I (A.D. 29-500), *The winning of the Roman Empire*, contains nothing controversial, and could be used to supplement a course in Church History; it is

doubtful whether the remainder of the set would suit the needs of a Catholic school.

(b) *Albert Schweitzer*. The Author of two important books on Schweitzer has contributed to this series and prepared notes to accompany the pictures which give us an insight into the versatility and great courage of this doctor, who was also a missionary and an expert musician, as well as a profound thinker and writer on Theology. If we cannot accept his theological position we can admire his sincere and wholehearted devotion to Our Lord which issued in deeds of mercy. It is this last aspect of his life work that the strip aims at bringing before us.

G. FRENCH STRIPS

English Catholics have much to learn from the producers of material for Visual Education in the field of religion. For this reason it is worth while going to the trouble of obtaining some examples. Though supplied with French commentaries and captions, many of them could be used with classes making a study of French and with others also if the teacher can translate straightforward French. A few chosen to indicate variety of treatment are mentioned here.

St. Bruno et les Chartreux

Editions du Berger, 9053, 9054.

This is a good example of a series of "Saints who founded Orders". The first strip is devoted to the life story of St. Bruno, and the pictures are excellent; the second strip shows us in clear drawings and photographs something of the life and spirit of the Order of Carthusians today: the Church living and influencing world history.

St. Louis, Roi de France

Histoire de l'Eglise écrite par les Saints. Editions du Berger, 9041.

This is taken from another very good series on Church History. Contemporary pictures and modern reconstructions of the scenes of the King-Saint's life are skillfully blended. This strip would be most useful as an adjunct to a study of the Europe of the later Middle Ages.

Les Actes des Apôtres

Editions Lumina, Bloud et Gay.

A very extensive library of strips is issued under this name. The New Testament is covered in great detail. This deals with the early life and conversion of Paul; it has lively pictures in strong colours which will appeal to the youthful mind.

Le Loup de Gubio

is an attractive example of black and white line drawing and silhouette in pictures that tell a story without need for elaborate explanation.

A New Educational Film Library. Britannica Films Division

A selection of those films reviewed below are distributing 16 mm. sound films for classroom use. These are ten minute films with a clearly-spoken commentary, and cover a wide variety of subjects, including Geography, Science, Biology, Hygiene, Social Studies, Athletics, etc. Films may be hired or copies purchased outright. Catalogues and all information may be obtained on application to Britannica Films Division, Encyclopaedia Britannica Limited, 211 Piccadilly, London, W.1.

Industrial Provinces of Canada

No. 125. Hire : 7s. 6d. first day, 2s. 6d. each subsequent day.

This begins with a map showing the position of the provinces Ontario and Quebec. A short summary of the historical development follows explaining the settlements of French and British and the rapid increase in population since 1900. The provinces attract tourists and holiday makers and there are pictures showing the beauty of the "thousand islands", lakes and streams, and the joys of winter sports.

After this we see the serious work of the provinces fur-trading, agriculture (dairy and mixed farming), fruit growing, and manufactures (lumbering, paper making, manufacture of farm implements, food preparation, textile manufacture). The importance of water power is emphasised here. There

follows a survey of the different minerals obtained here—gold, silver, copper, nickel, asbestos. The film concludes with pictures of transport and communications, including export routes, and towns.

The film is very good, particularly in the use of maps at the beginning to show exactly where the places are. It contains a vast wealth of material, enough for many lessons.

Prairie Provinces of Canada

No. 143. Hire as above.

First a map shows the extent of the Prairie Provinces. The different regions are shown, wheat belt, forest and tundra (also by maps). A historical outline shows the importance of fur trading in first attracting the white man and his eventual settlement there.

From this point the film concentrates on wheat production in the south of the prairie provinces. All aspects of the wheat farming are dealt with, growth of the wheat, machinery used (binder and giant combine), transport via Winnipeg, the Great Lakes to the St. Lawrence, there to be shipped to Europe.

The film finishes with a general account of the geography of the prairie provinces—other crops grown such as oats and barley, the fattening of pigs giving us our Canadian bacon, and the reversal to pasture lands of areas where soil erosion threatened. Finally the film explains how development has been linked up with the building of the railways.

The film is very good, particularly in the pictures of farming processes like ploughing, which are so difficult to explain to children without moving pictures. Again this film contains a considerable amount of material and would be suitable for the revision of the whole geography of the Prairie Provinces.

Argentina

No. 144. Hire as above.

The first part of the film deals with life in Buenos Aires, where live one-

fifth of Argentina's people. By following the daily lives of two citizens, a packing plant employee and a grain broker, the film shows that the city is chiefly concerned with the meat packing industry and the trade in grain.

The second part of the film deals with the pampas region, with its wheat growing, cattle and sheep rearing, with good pictures of the gauchos.

The film ends by showing the dependence of the city on the products of the pampas.

The film is good and does emphasise the importance of Argentina's agricultural production. Sometimes the rapid change of scene is difficult to follow.

Cotton

No. 397. Hire as above.

This film traces the story of cotton from the cotton boll to finished fabric.

It begins in the cotton field, showing the process of cotton picking either by hand or by machine. The cotton next goes to the gin where the seeds are extracted. The cotton is then pressed into bales and taken to the mill, where we see all the processes of manufacture, carding, combing, spinning and weaving.

The film is very good indeed, although it was not really clear how the cotton picking machine worked.

Mosquito

No. 359. Hire as above.

This gives the life cycle of the common mosquito and the malaria mosquito, showing the places where they are likely to breed.

We are shown the various methods that are being adopted to combat the mosquito—such as the draining of swamps and the filling of ponds with the natural enemies of the mosquito.

It is an excellent film, from the point of view of either science or geography.

INSTITUTE NOTES

C.F.I. Summer School

Arrangements are now nearing the final stages. I hope that we shall have an encouraging number of students. We are doing our best to provide an interesting programme and we do ask for the support of our members and friends to make this Summer School a success. Past years have indicated that residential summers may prove more attractive than non-residential courses organised in London. It remains to be seen whether this is true. We do depend very much on this Summer School to be able to form an estimate of how successful our future plans for an independent, professionally competent production unit for religious films and films for humanity are going to be. Do please help us to help you. Make the Summer School part of your holiday.

Film Competition

Another effort on our part to discover what talent may be latent or unrecognised is the Sub-standard Film Competition, which is now open. Andrew Buchanan has very generously offered a prize of £20 to the person whose film is judged to be the best, technically and imaginatively. As we announced last month, the following well known persons have consented to adjudicate: Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart, Film Critic; Andrew Buchanan, Film Producer and Director; The Very Reverend Hilary Carpenter, O.P., Chairman of the C.F.I.; and Lyn Lockwood, Screenwriter.

A Prize Plaque will be awarded to the winner of the competition and diplomas to the runners-up.

Mr. Buchanan thinks that it may encourage people to submit film entries if a definite subject is indicated. He suggests, therefore, that a film depicting or encouraging the idea of *Peace* or *Humanity* or possibly a religious film depicting the contribution made to human well-being by such

organisations as the S.V.P., the Y.C.W., Ex-Prisoners Aid, etc., etc. Once again we appeal to you to help us to realise our ambition of a really worthwhile team of technicians making really worthwhile films for humanity. This Competition will greatly assist us in planning for the future. But we cannot do it without you.

Film Course

The Southern Region of the Association of Convent Schools is continuing its Course in Film Appreciation. Nearly 300 nuns of every Order and Congregation known to education assembled at a cinema in Wardour Street, London, on April 20th to see the film *I Remember Mama*, shown through the courtesy of R.K.O. Radio Pictures, Ltd. Afterwards at the Sacred Heart Convent, Hammer-smith, lectures were delivered by Lyn Lockwood on Screenwriting, and Andrew Buchanan on Production and Direction. The next session will include a lecture on Art Direction and Designing for Films by Edward Carrick, the well known Art Director.

Report from Bournemouth

We have received this report from one of our most active supporters in Bournemouth:

"On Sunday, May 7th, Abbot Upson gave a film show in the Corpus Christi Guildhall, Boscombe (Bournemouth), under the auspices of the C.P.E.A. The films shown were those taken by Abbot Upson during his tour of North America, *As sure as God's in Gloucestershire*, a day in the life of a Prinknash monk, and a film on the formal re-opening of Pluscarden Priory. The show was enthusiastically received by a crowded audience.

"The Boscombe C.P.E.A. has been holding regular monthly showings of films of Catholic interest for the past 18 months, and it is hoped that some useful work has been done in bringing to the parish such films as *Visitation*,

Monsieur Vincent, The Sacrifice We Offer, Don Bosco and others of this type. Focus has been on sale at these shows, and sales have increased from

the original dozen a month to three dozen. The chief difficulty foreseen regarding these film shows is lack of a sufficient supply of suitable films."

COVER PERSONALITY

GLYNIS JOHNS

Her personal success in *State Secret* has brought the name of Glynis Johns unforgettably before the public eye. Though not necessarily her best rôle, it is certainly her most important one and will serve to establish her reputation as an actress of outstanding ability and charm.

I first saw Glynis Johns when, at the age of 17, she caught the public fancy for her enchanting stage performance as the younger daughter in Esther McCracken's phenomenally successful *Quiet Weekend*. Her quaint, elfish personality, her curious husky squeak of a voice fitted the part perfectly but it was difficult to imagine her in more mature rôles. I next saw her as the pathetic little German girl in *49th Parallel*. A small part, but it remains fixed in my memory as one of the outstanding character studies of that very well-acted film. The voice was still the quaint, childish lisp that intrigued us in *Quiet Weekend*, but the character using it was different: we realised that its owner was an actress. Memory next shows us an M.-G.-M. film called *Tartu*, starring Robert Donat as a British intelligence officer masquerading as a Gestapo agent in Rumania. The workers in the factory are sabotaging the arms they are supposed to be manufacturing. Among the girls employed in the factory is Glynis Johns. In an unglamorous overall and headkerchief, she still contrived to attract attention for a dramatic and moving performance as a girl who gets shot as a saboteur.

I am writing away from reference books so cannot say whether I am omitting any of the films in which Glynis Johns has appeared, but I certainly recall her work in *Perfect*

Strangers. This was directed by Alexander Korda and starred Robert Donat again, with Deborah Kerr and Ann Todd: quite a powerful cast; yet still the memory shows me Glynis Johns as a perky little Wren trying to comfort Deborah Kerr. In this film she added to her repertoire of characterisations: hitherto the screen had asked her to be solemn and sad; here she had the opportunity to be amusing as a pert little modern feminist with a special line in repartee. The next film that comes to mind is *This Man Is Mine*, based on the play *A Soldier For Christmas*. Again Glynis Johns has a pert, cheeky rôle as the housemaid who joins the N.A.A.F.I. and competes with her former mistress's daughter for the favours of the Canadian soldier whom the family has invited for Christmas. This was not a very good film and Glynis Johns' part in it was not better than average. Anyone could have played it. *Frieda*, the controversial film about the R.A.F. pilot who marries a German girl who helped him to escape, gave her an opportunity to vary her style: the previous two films had tended to stereotype her. As the sister of the pilot, unwilling to accept her German sister-in-law too easily, she again showed variations in her talent for stealing scenes even with the competition of experienced players like Flora Robson and Mai Zetterling.

Her trick of capturing scenes was exemplified again in the delicious performance she gave as the debutante in *An Ideal Husband*. The Edwardian costume seemed to suit her puckish charm to perfection. Then follows *Dear Mr. Prohack* and *Miranda*. The latter was something quite specially suited to her. As the Mermaid who

came to Town and moved in the best circles, she had full scope for her fairy-like personality and when, at the reception after the Press Show, she was present to talk to the critics, I was not the only one who found himself surreptitiously glancing to see whether she really had a tail! It was on this occasion that her matter-of-factness as a talker first impressed me. She was not at all the usual glamorous, artificially reserved film star, waiting to be caught by the camera. She talked freely and wisely about her work on stage and screen and showed herself to be truly mistress of her craft. Again in Venice last year at the Film Festival,

she was quite at her ease among the Continental film celebrities but seemed so much more real and natural than they. Watching her at work in the Dolomites on location for *State Secret*, one realised that here was an actress who, though she might be considered by some as rather limited by voice and physique, was capable of impressing any rôle she plays with that indefinable quality called personality so that though one may forget the names and faces of almost all the normal "stars", one never forgets the parts played by Glynis Johns.

JOHN VINCENT.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

"Focus" and Gambling

Sir,

We find Focus extremely helpful to the Films Team of the Young Catholic Students Movement, who use it in preparing their reviews for the benefit of the whole school. It is also most useful during the Religious Discussion period in class, e.g., the review of *Any Number Can Play* formed the basis of a discussion of gambling. Many other reviews have been used in the same way.

Focus is a publication which I would like to see in every Catholic home, particularly where there are young people. I think it is invaluable in helping to develop the "Catholic mind" on films.

SR. M. PAUL.

St. Anne's School,
Temora,
New South Wales.

Film Revivals

Sir,

Would it be possible for you to introduce a list of film revivals and where they are being revived and when?

Many thousands of people who have missed a film when it was showing at the Central London cinemas or want to

see it again have no way of finding out what films are on at which cinemas except the Central (very expensive ones).

As far as I know there is no present source of information regarding what films are showing outside the centre cinemas usually quoted in the daily and weekly papers, and many of the old pictures are better than what is being turned out today as far as I am concerned.

Yours faithfully,

L. G. CULLETON.

20 Palace Court,
London, W.2.

BOOK REVIEW

"Children in the Cinema", published this week price 1s., is on sale through W. H. Smith's bookstalls. It sums up the recent report and comments on points of importance and interest to parents. It reprints the photos of fright from "Picture Post" and contrasts these with others showing children's joy—what the cinema could and should be for children if there were more good films. Readers are advised to order their copy now.

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National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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AIMS AND OBJECTS

1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



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THE ATOM AND YOU

Made by Andrew Buchanan. A plea by a well-known American scientist for the positive use of atomic energy. Sound. Monochrome. 2 reels. 20 mins. Hiring fee: £1 1s. 0d.

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CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE
20 Ovington Square, London, S.W.3

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

JULY 1950

No. 7

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

(I)

Today, the character of a child is made or marred, to an extent which is not universally recognised, by the light and sound and atmosphere of the cinema, for all the world's children love picture stories. But, there are pictures *and* pictures. If a child is brought up on trashy picture-stuff, all that it will contribute to the world later on will be a trashy and empty mind. If the child-mind is stuffed with mucky pictures, what great chance has it later on when it must face the devil, the world and the flesh? Child minds doped with anti-Christian or anti-social film stuff are not likely to make sound Christians or sane citizens. Dark, dangerous, dirty thoughts placed in the sub-conscious minds of young children, through the subtle medium of films, is hardly what the Divine Doctor of souls and minds has ordered.

"Whosoever shall scandalise one of these little ones who believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea."

It is a coward's way out to argue that under the circumstances it

were better had the cinema never been born. The fault lies not in the cinema qua cinema; but in the indifference and sometimes stupidity and negligence of parents and those in authority. No parent would give its children tainted food to eat; but there are lots of parents who couldn't care less what sort of films their children digest.

(II)

One swallow does not make a summer. One or two letters do not prove a point; however, two letters received from Mrs. Bower will underline the argument of this editorial and strengthen the plea for action made by Mrs. Bower in this issue. I have omitted names and addresses:

(a) From a cinema attendant

"... I have read your report on the Children Cinema shows on Saturday mornings. I myself am a cinema attendant. I am shocked and disgusted at the wicked and brutal films they are showing to children. We watch the reactions of these children and believe me it is something terrible. Three weeks ago the children saw a picture called *Home Sweet Homicide*. It is all about ghosts and kidnapping. You could not hear the picture; they

were shouting and crying. We had to go round and calm them down. There is another picture called *Little Accident*. If you would get the chance to be with the children when these two pictures are shown you would get a shock. Mothers would (I am in favour of X films) not let their children see them if they saw them themselves. It's about time they stopped showing these kinds of films to children which must play on their minds when they retire at night. There should be a law to stop adult persons taking children into the cinema who are not their guardians and leave them there on their own. There is a boy of 9 years of age. He comes to this cinema 6 nights out of 7 from 5 o'clock to 9 in all category of films. The manager knows. Why is that child allowed in?"

(b) From an ex-approved school boy

"... I wonder if you mind an ex-approved school boy taking the liberty of writing to you? I thought of doing this after reading your article on films and children. How right you are in believing films can cause

delinquency. I should know. I am now 22 and endeavouring to live down my juvenile past which I wholly attribute to gangster films and the like. I had a good home (except for being "banged off" to the pictures too often). I certainly had no need to steal. It's incredible looking back now and remembering how I used to watch the screen for new angles and then try them out, seeing the film again if necessary. Although I spent two periods at the same approved school after various short days at remand homes and of course probations I never attempted to sell or even use the stuff that I stole.

"The danger years for a child seeing films are from 13 to 16. The present (ruling) where an under 16 cannot see an A film unless with parent is a good one *if carried out*. Alas, cinemas have been allowed to get away with it. Some conscientious cinemas have done their duty and have proved that the system can and has worked but they have only suffered financially for their trouble . . ."

EDITOR.

CINEMA BROADCAST

The Text of the Medieval Disputation

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From: The Manager,

Blackfriars, St. Giles, Oxford

Where Do We Go From Here?

There are two Latin words which are going to become increasingly familiar as the months pass, and which might well be addressed to the British film industry:

"Quo Vadis?"

At the moment the industry stands at a fork in the road. Ahead of it are two paths—one a long and uphill affair leading to a revival of British films, the other a short-cut beset with dangers. To put it more plainly, the industry is faced with a choice of making British films or Anglo-American films.

Now a recent Treasury Report, which the general public may have missed, was very illuminating. It stated that the amount of money earned by our films in the American market in the year ending April, 1949, was a little under £400,000—about half the sum that one very successful Hollywood film can earn in its own market. I do not know how many films it took to earn this amount, but even if we put the figure as low as ten, it means that the average per picture was no more than £40,000. On this basis, the average amount a British film can earn in the huge American market is about one-third the average amount it can earn in its own smaller, heavily-taxed home market.

Whether these disappointing figures are due to American allergy to British films or to unfair distribution, is outside the scope of this article, but it seems that we might do very well to concentrate exclusively on films made entirely for our own audiences and budgeted within the home market limits, regarding anything we can get from America as a surprise present.

This, of course, is the hard way. Handicapped by lack of money and lack of confidence on the part of investors, we shall have to re-build a crippled industry, developing our native talent—a thing at which we have not been

conspicuously successful—and standing on our own feet.

The other way is easier, but abounds in snags. For there is a trend, both on the part of the Government and private enterprise, to encourage the Americans to use their frozen earnings in financing pictures in this country. This is a prospect that contains some alarming possibilities.

There are two things that can be said in its favour: firstly, it will create work for a large number of unemployed technicians; secondly, it will secure for us a better release than our pictures have hitherto had on the other side of the Atlantic, as the Americans, naturally, will want to see their investments distributed in as wide a market as possible.

On the other hand, while our studio Trade Unions will not permit a Hollywood Director to work in this country if the job can be done as efficiently by a British counterpart, there is nothing, as far as I can see, that can stop the infiltration of American stars and writers, who will displace our own people.

The danger is, therefore, that we shall become a sort of Hollywood annexe, because these Anglo-American films will, of course, be tailored to make them attractive to American audiences. There is always a chance that the Americans will use their frozen credits in the production of films designed for the British market, but it is a very faint one, and it is to be hoped that a paternal Government will not consider making this step compulsory by reviving the renter's quota, which was responsible for the awful pre-war quota quickie.

The next few months will show us what the future path of the British film industry is to be.

LYN LOCKWOOD.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 6—FICTIONAL VERSUS FACTUAL FILMS

To the indiscriminating pleasure-seeker, theatre and cinema are just alternative providers of entertainment, the main difference being the prices of admission. Nor is this surprising, for the cinema is forever borrowing material from the theatre, and the lighter side of the latter, bent on countering the encircling competition of cinemas, concentrates on increasingly extravagant productions to entice the filmgoer into the shabbier, less comfortable, but more dignified theatre auditorium.

To the pleasure-seeker, it's all entertainment, whether live or photographed. Can then, film claim to be an *independent* medium of dramatic expression, and what can it do which other media cannot?

Think, for a moment, of any perfectly constructed, well-written play. It is presented in, say, three acts, within the confined limits of the stage; each of the three scenes, or maybe only one, consists of a three-sided set, and we witness the drama unfolding through the missing fourth wall.

Now assume that same play is adapted to the screen, not necessarily because it offers good film material, but because it has proved a winner on the stage, and/or its author's name is a household word. If the film version is produced entirely within a studio, what will be the chief difference in presentation compared to the stage version? First, we shall observe *pictorial emphasis*. Whereas on the stage the characters remain life-size, of course, and indeed seem very small in a large theatre, on the screen they will be larger than life and, in close-ups, they will be enormous. Secondly, we

shall notice how the camera moves from room to room, person to person, following, probing, revealing. Now when we watch a stage play, *we* control our eyes, looking where we wish, but when we look at a film, our eyes are guided by the camera, and we look through the lens, which makes viewing very easy. The camera draws our attention to this or that point at the right moment so that even a person of dull intelligence need miss nothing essential. Such effortless looking provides one of the main reasons for the cinema's popularity.

Another reason is the amplification of the human voice. Today, we rarely encounter the inaudible screen actor, whose voice is carried to every corner of vast interiors via loud speakers, whereas inaudibility in the theatre is not rare.

It would seem then, that film wins this first round, but actually it loses, for it has no real right to present dramatic material which was conceived for the legitimate theatre and which consequently depends upon dialogue, for film's primary function is to tell its stories *pictorially*. If and when it does, it is justified in claiming to be an independent medium. When, however, it borrows its material from other established media, and restricts pictorial movement in so doing, film is not doing justice to itself, even though, as I have said, camera mobility enables stage play to be dissected, magnified and given a flow impossible on the stage. On the other hand, the stage play, seemingly imprisoned within three walls, is a complete form of dramatic art. It does not need to borrow from other media.

Film comes into its own when it presents material especially written for it, and when it escapes from the studio. Think of the cramping effect on a medium capable of presenting the natural backgrounds of the world, which is confined to studio settings. This truth is being realised more and more, and you will notice that the most successful films are usually those which present drama or comedy in actual settings, both exteriors and interiors, thus blending the factual with the fictional.

This world is a very uneven sort of place—a mixture of cleanliness and dirtiness, tidiness and carelessness, beauty and ugliness, and in the film world, there are many brilliant art directors, but none can compete with reality. Producers in this country are successfully weaving stories into the natural scene more and more frequently. It is an art which has long been apparently in French, Italian and Russian films, their success being

largely due to naturalness. They are not too highly polished, nor lit with that hard, even brilliance which often makes a scene resemble a shop window with a population of over or under-dressed wax women.

Such natural films capture the raggedness of life: its light and shade. They do not over-dramatise events, and they reveal the charm of the rural scene, the drabness of the back street, the cool beauty of architecture in simple, unselfconscious fashion, and people and backgrounds become one. Life is never idealised nor glamorised, and so is more beautiful.

Look, then, for those moments when film reveals its wonderful ability to do those things of which other media are incapable, and assess, from time to time, whether this great visual medium is moving towards artistic and dramatic independence, or being imprisoned within the costly walls of the film studio.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

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ROME AND REALITY

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CATHOLIC FILM
INSTITUTE PILGRIMAGE — By Fr. John Preedy

Twelve of us set off from Bovingdon airport on the morning of May 25th. We were the tremulous backbone of the Catholic Film Institute Pilgrimage to Rome and we were to be given a stiffening by Fr. Burke, Miss Freda Bruce-Lockhart and others who were already in Rome.

NO TIME FOR SIESTAS

A strenuous three days were spent combining the main spiritual purpose of our journey with the Catholic Action inherent in the activities of the Film Congress, described elsewhere. Even if the Hotel Continentale had been a quiet place, there was no time for *siestas*. Mad dogs may have been asleep in the noonday sun, but Englishmen, together with other film zealots from Belgium, Brazil, France, Holland, Ireland, Spain and the rest were abroad and about. The Italian counterpart of our own Institute scored highly in their planning of meetings, expeditions and refreshment for their guests.

As Congress members we had the privilege of a special tribune for one of those extraordinary public audiences the Holy Father has initiated this year in St. Peter's. The whole idea of these was an inspiration of genius and the Holy Father somehow leaves on the vast gathering an impression of fatherly informality. He gives each group its individual recognition and then speaks in various languages to the whole mass of which the group is a well-contented part. The scene has often

been described in recent months and it need not be attempted here.

The Jubilee visits to the four Basilicas were made in the formal manner. These we carried out with the members of the Congress. Genuflecting at the Holy Door and led by cross-bearer and acolytes we entered each Basilica, serpentineing our way to avoid collision with other pilgrim groups on the same mission. These great Christian churches, devoid of our Oh! so prim and respectable benches, were like vast business houses or a Stock Exchange where the business was repentance and pardon, loyalty to our Catholic Faith, and the well-being that comes with union in a common purpose. We would say our Litanies and sing our *Salve Regina* and it would be no disturbing distraction that others, many others, could be heard singing their *Adoro Te* or *Heilige* something.

WHIT SUNDAY CANONISATION

Then there was the Whit Sunday canonisation of Ste. Jeanne de Valois. We of the English contingent of the Cinema Congress arriving at St. Peter's before 6-30 a.m., found our reserved places already annexed by others—and the proceedings were not to begin until 8 a.m. However, we were insinuated into "standing places", where we had a perfect view, though from afar, of the Papal Altar with which we were in a line. We waited, a small island of northerners amid oceans of French pilgrims. In the mêlée at the entrance they had had their share of Gallic fire; their practical folding chairs and picnic bags had the sharp edges befitting



Margaret Moultrie, Fr. Ethrington, Fr. Preedy, Fr. Connell



Fr. Little and Fr. Masterson

weapons of offence. But now these same people were so kind and generous in giving our little group a turn of rest off our feet. While waiting they sang their hymns and we were able to hum the one which went to the air of "Auld Lang Syne". The canonisation and the Papal Mass were unforgettable experiences, and we were truly participants and not spectators. We were almost glad we had lost our privileged places in case we should have been tempted into the attitude of spectators. Somebody, the other day, speaking about the slow progress of the cause of our English Martyrs and the blame that lies on us for not taking up their cult fanatically, said that it would be a good idea to do a deal and pay a few French people to start praying to them and invoking their aid. That, he said, would do the trick. I thought of this in my vigorous, practical, prayerful French surroundings on this canonisation morning.

MOVING SIGHTS

For men and women of all nations it took what seemed hours to get out of St. Peter's. I saw an African in coloured dress and a gold or gilt crown on his head. He had to give the common touch, for it was his fate to jostle in the crowd with us lesser mortals. Incidentally, one of the noticeable and moving sights of our short time in Rome was the pilgrimage from Central Africa. Native priests and laymen were certainly conspicuous by the unconcealed happiness on their polished ebony faces. **No colour bar here.** Next after the Holy Father the most

sought after personage was a smiling African bishop as black as your hat.

We had our amusements too. It was amusing to have a cup of coffee and a doughnut, intimidatingly known as a "bomba", for breakfast; it was fun to watch the others trying to cope with spaghetti; there was humour in the situation when three of us entered into a council of war to find the best way of saying in Italian: "Where is the Trevi Fountain, if you please?" only to find that the lady replied: "My, I've been trying all afternoon to find someone in this city who speaks Italian". It was all kindly, innocent, ridiculous fun, bubbling up as relief to the deep charged emotions we were experiencing. **And if anyone says that religion is of the Intellect and the Will, let him be in Rome with any sense of history in his soul and try and leave the emotions out. Just let him try.**

LAST ACT

On the night before we left, our party was happy to give a modest dinner in honour of Fr. Conrell, who had been throughout so generous and helpful in guiding us in the ways we should go, and of Mrs. Moultrie, who was the young mother rather than the governess of the little flock she had succeeded in gathering together for this pilgrimage. There followed a race to the Colosseum, where our last act together was the quiet saying of the Rosary amid the embattled memories of the early martyrs; and in the morning, a rush to get Mass and Communion, then delays and finally the flight from Rome, and reality.

FOCUS INDEX

A complete index of FOCUS: A Film Review, Vols. I and II, is now available. Copies may be obtained from the Manager, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7, on receipt of stamps to the value of 1½d.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

ODETTE

Starring: Anna Neagle, Trevor Howard, co-starring Marius Goring, Peter Ustinov. **Producer and Director:** Herbert Wilcox. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 123 minutes.

Herbert Wilcox and his team may well be proud of the production of *Odette*. Stars and supporting cast can look back upon a job well done and a cause well served. It must be very satisfying to bear a part in something worth while. And this film is worth while.

With deft touches and without overloading, the story of *Odette* makes clear the challenge to the dignity of man and reveals the spiritual qualities that alone maintain this dignity inviolate. Colonel Maurice Buckmaster re-lives on the screen his war job of director of these French operations in which *Odette* was so surprisingly involved. At the beginning he vouches, as far as human memory can be relied on, for the truth of the incidents that follow.

The story of *Odette Sansom* who by her courage and devotion won the George Cross is familiar to most. Anna Neagle plays the part of *Odette* with honesty and with no concession to physical glamour of any kind. The original conflict between her duties as a mother and the call to more than patriotism is poignant. The emotional difficulties of her choice are not wallowed in but are indicated with sure, steady strokes in a telephone conversation to their convent school and by the way her heart is shown to be with them in her subsequent conversations with her associates on the job in hand. She is trained and briefed for her mission into France. She is also equipped. The question of those

lethal tablets, which in fact she carried but never used, is one which I should very much like to see argued on the moral plane. The modern persecutor's assault on the mind, including the will, of one who resists is so ruthless, so dangerous in its scientific precision that capture and interrogation may lead to the incrimination and death of others and setbacks to the cause at heart. Courage is no longer the only factor. But while it is lawful to give your life for your brother, you cannot take your own life by direct means. Yes, I should like very much to see this question of lethal tablets argued. Anyway, in the case in point, *Odette* was able to withstand mental and physical torture for over two years and keep up her "I have nothing to say".

Trevor Howard gives a notable performance in the part of Peter Churchill, the chief of *Odette's* action group. He himself states in a television interview that he made no attempt to impersonate Churchill, but used his actor's right to interpret the part he was given to play. It was a wise and proper decision thoroughly justified by results.

Peter Ustinov as Arnaud, the radio operator, provides what comedy there is in a study of grumbling devotion, a type familiar in every band of heroes. Marius Goring is the German High Command Intelligence Officer who hates Nazism, has to co-operate with it as a soldier, yet regards himself in no way responsible for its excesses. It is not an unsympathetic study.

The film is full of authentic Catholic touches which will attract readers of *Focus*. It is not that the Church is being exploited to add sentimental appeal and baptise the box office. This has been done so often, and how disappointing and embarrassing film Catholicism can be. No, it is a question of elementals and of the fact that in elementals in our western world, the Church can never be very

far away. Here it is, plumb in the middle of everything. Odette was a Christian mother—evidence provided. Prayer is not a desperate affair for emergencies—that “comes out well. Odette has what all Christians should have, the power of stripping away hypocrisy. Henri (Goring) is not allowed to get away with self-exculpatory regrets. He may regret, but also he must accept responsibility and blame. Before her interrogation and probable torture, a German priest is kind and comforts her and she re-acts as to a priest and not as to a representative of the enemy. After her torture he again sees her and speaks as a compassionate priest should. She asks as one condemned to death if she can have Mass (presumably in her cell, otherwise I cannot understand his reply). He tells her that the authorities would never permit that; he is only allowed to comfort the dying. Whereupon she remarks that this can only be because the Nazis are afraid—a profound observation since the only thing that evil does fear is goodness. We have had evidence before of the priestly kindness of German priests in these dreary prisons and it is good to find that Odette encountered it herself, and that the incident should have been considered worth telling. Then, again, towards the end of her imprisonment the panicking Prison Commandant has tried to pin responsibility for Odette's welfare on to her hitherto harsh wardress. The name of Churchill could make a difference to the fate of whoever bore such a responsibility. The wardress becomes hysterical at the approach of the American forces and begs Odette to intercede for her. She is the mother of three children. Odette tells her calmly that she also is the mother of three children. Raving with fear she asks Odette what shall she do, to which comes the scathing yet pitiful reply: “Have you forgotten how to pray?”

There is no hatred of Germans as such in the film, though I should not care to be a German seeing it. What the film lays bare is modern man's fatal ease in passing on responsibility as long as he has an order to do whatever it may be. In fact it is the Germans who are under examination. But unless we realise that there

are laws over-riding those of the State, the High Command, the party, the Trade Union, or the firm, we are all just as likely to find ourselves acting against conscience because “it is an order”. Once that comes in as the accepted thing, then it is simply a question of degree, for in kind we are one with the irresponsible Nazis, Gestapo and the rest. This for me is the compelling lesson of the story of Odette. Human Responsibility flows from Human Dignity.

The film has integrity both of purpose and in execution. In a way it is high level dramatic commentary. Perhaps it is a little too long. Two hours lived with the heroes should not be too much, but I found it so. Artistry, one thinks, left to itself would have shortened it, but sincerity came along and demanded that this or that should not be left untold. It is very nearly a great film with a memorable performance of an Anna Neagle a long way away from Park Lane.

X.

IN A LONELY PLACE

Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Gloria Grahame, Frank Lovejoy.
Director: Nicholas Ray. **Producer:** Robert Lord. **Distributors:** Columbia. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

Sense, suspense, good acting and an intelligent script are features of this film. It has the entertainment value of a thriller plus an interesting analysis of a complex character: Dixon Steel (Humphrey Bogart) who is a queer mixture of charm and brutality, gentleness and violence, selfishness and generosity.

There is always a *reason* why we behave badly. This film endeavours to expose the cause of Steel's mental trouble; but it in no way suggests a cure. I got the impression that the film was rather on the side of Steel, who throws more than his weight about, just because he hasn't got what he wants most—literary success. *Naturally* speaking, what Steel required was a sock on the jaw. *Supernaturally*

speaking, he needed to say his prayers and do a bit of penance, for there are some devils in the mind which can only be cast out by prayer and fasting.

The argument of this film seemed to me to be that a man finds mental peace and becomes a decent fellow when he fulfils his ambitions which, of course, is arrant nonsense. "Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition . . . by that sin fell the angels."

However, this film provides something to think and argue about. Humphrey Bogart plays the neurotic Steel with realism. Gloria Grahame gives a distinguished performance of Laurel Gray, the girl who loves Steel and is prepared to cleave to him. The old clichés are avoided. The drama is not spoiled by a false ending. It is, I think, worth seeing.

E.

SO LONG AT THE FAIR

Starring: Jean Simmons, Dirk Bogarde, with David Tomlinson, Honor Blackman, Cathleen Nesbitt, Felix Aylmer. **Producer:** Betty E. Box. **Directors:** Terence Fisher and Antony Darnborough. **Distributors:** G.-F.-D. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 83 minutes.

This film has been rather badly received. And indeed it is uninspired. A variation on the same theme as *The Lady Vanishes*, it lacks tension and just peters out. And there is something too matter-of-fact about Jean Simmons' acting.

But the picture has redeeming points. People supposed to be French talk to one another in French with good accents instead of in conventional broken English. The period is that of the Paris Exhibition in 1889 and so black waistcoats are very properly seen with tailcoats and white ties. (But in the hospital sequence I think I spotted a statue of the Little Flower—who was in fact still alive in 1889). Some people near me complained that there was "no romance". Knowing what they meant by romance I thought this an advantage.

Perhaps the can-can would come into the category of "lascivious dances"

which features in those questionnaires issued to put ideas into the heads of Catholic critics in some parts of the Continent. Otherwise the film was remarkably free from anything to which objection could be taken.

Q.

MRS. MIKE

Starring: Dick Powell, Evelyn Keyes, J. M. Kerrigan, Angela Clarke. **Producer:** Edward Gross. **Director:** Louis King. **Distributors:** United Artists. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 100 minutes.

It was a pleasant surprise to find that a film, which did not promise anything out of the ordinary according to the synopsis, turned out to be definitely superior. What a relief to get away from the sophisticated Circes (glamour girls) of Hollywood society, from the artificial trivialities of so-called civilisation to the simple, straightforward life as God meant us to live it.

The plot, too, is very simple. A Canadian Mounted Policeman gets to love a city girl and she marries him, going to live in a north-west frontier post. The rest of the film concerns the happiness, trials and adventures of their early married life. Such gangrenous sores as adultery, divorce and triangle-love are refreshingly absent from this film. It has moments of supreme beauty, both as regards mountain scenery, and as regards the depths of human emotion. It is finely acted, and has nothing of that self-conscious smugness so often seen in film stars. It is by no means lacking in adventure, and not one moment of the film could justly be called dull. Yet it is a documentary film in the sense that it gives a realistic account of the actual life of a northern mounted policeman, which makes us think, and perhaps brings home to us for the first time that there are people whose lives are fuller, happier, deeper than many of ours, although they have to do without many modern luxury-necessities. If you want to understand what I mean, don't miss this film. You'll be glad you went.

P. F.

FATHER IS A BACHELOR

Starring: William Holden, Coleen Gray, Mary Jane Saunders and Charles Winninger. A Columbia Picture. **Directors:** Norman Foster and Abby Berlin. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 80 minutes approx.

We are so often told that people go to the cinema to be entertained: so what? For Catholics even entertainment has to be reasonable—up to a point; but the point seems to be a long way down the scale of what intelligent people will put up with. Anyhow, here is a film that is frankly sentimental, in which child appeal and romantic appeal share the honours. A minstrel singer comes across a family of young orphans and is cajoled into fathering them. The result is a series of situations that are quite unlikely, faintly entertaining and would have been suitable for the family, but that some jokes are made at the expense of elderly ladies in the marriage market. It is never easy to decide to what extent such jokes are merely bad taste or bad morals. This example seems to be mainly bad manners.

V.

WABASH AVENUE

Starring: Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Phil Harris. **Director:** Henry Koster. **Producer:** William Perlberg. **Distributors:** 20th Century - Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 93 minutes.

This is one of the films that ought not to have left the shores where it was made. It is a cheap, empty comedy, played round the all-too-familiar triangle theme. It features Betty Grable's voice in several variety songs, some of which are just bearable, others not. Nearly all the action of the film takes place in low-class downtown night clubs, which doesn't exactly heighten the interest. There are a few scenes which are quite amusing, but this does little to atone for the rapidity of the whole film.

P. F.

DEPORTED

Starring: Marta Toren, Jeff Chandler, Claude Dauphin, with Marina Berti. **Director:** Robert Siodmak. **Producer:** Robert Buckner. A Universal-International Picture. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 89 minutes.

We must first decide whether virtuous and worldly-wise contessas do fall in love with oafish Americanised Italians—even if they are unaware of Sing-Sing backgrounds. Once we can get over that this is an interesting film for adults.

The scene is laid in Tuscany and we are assured that the film was made extensively in Italy. Nearly all the players are American speaking Italians and the whole thing swings along with all their natural vivacity. Briefly, it is yet another tale of bad man making good, helped along by the failure of his bad plans and the success of the kindly assumptions of good people.

Marta Toren, whom I've not seen before, makes a good job of her unlikely circumstances and does it all with quiet charm. Jeff Chandler, as the just slightly Simian deportee, and Claude Dauphin, in the rôle of a quiet and understanding detective, do good work. But, above all, I advise filmgoers to look out for Uncle Amando, as played by Silvio Minciotti. They will treasure him as I did.

X.

THE BIG LIFT

Starring: Montgomery Clift, Paul Douglas, Cornell Borchers. **Director:** George Seaton. **Producer:** William Perlberg. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B.

In so far as this film records the part America played in the air-lift during the days of the Russian blockade, it makes some contribution to film journalism; apart from that I don't think it has any great merit. Something better could have been made of such a subject. I agree with the fellow who said that the *Big Lift* is a big let-down.

F.

THE EAGLE AND THE HAWK

Starring: John Payne, Rhonda Fleming, Dennis O'Keefe.
Director: Lewis R. Foster.
Producers: William H. Pine and William C. Thomas. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A.
Category: B. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

This is a not unreasonable story told in technicolour which records lovely scenery. The acting is fair to middling and there is enough uninhibited patriotism to please the Americans and make the British uncomfortable. The hard riding and good shooting are a joy to behold. American girls (especially when they are playing Mexicans) are unbelievably tough. This particular heroine gets shot with a six shooter at a range of five yards. Believe it or not, when justice has been done, she shows every sign of a complete recovery. But the conventions have their place and this film cries out for a happy ending.

J. C.

KEY TO THE CITY

Starring: Clark Gable, Loretta Young, Frank Morgan. **Director:** George Sidney. **Producer:** Z. Wayne Griffin. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 98 minutes.

This is a well worked out comedy with plenty of amusing situations and plenty of laughter. Clark Gable and Loretta Young have no difficulty in keeping the ball of fun rolling. However, there are bits, in bad taste, which could have been left out.

E.

THE CHILD AND FILM CONGRESS

In conjunction with the present meeting of UNESCO in Florence a special international congress on the cinema for children is being held. Italy, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, Egypt, Mexico, Venezuela, the Argentine, Canada, Israel and Salvador are officially represented.

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Joyce
Grenfell as
shooting
gallery
attendant



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STAGE FRIGHT

Starring: Jane Wyman, Marlene Dietrich, Michael Wilding, Richard Todd, Alastair Sim, Sybil Thorndike, Miles Malleon and Joyce Grenfell. **Director:** Alfred Hitchcock. A Warner Brothers production. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 110 minutes.

Superlatives are rarely found in film reviews. Among critics "it isn't done" (not often, anyway) to show enthusiasm. That is left to the blurb, the adverts and the trailers, who traffic unashamedly in these things. But when there is spontaneous and enthusiastic appreciation at a press show, whatever they may write subsequently for the papers, you can be pretty sure you are up against something good. This thriller-comedy provoked keen tension and uncontrollable laughter, and at the end there was a crescendo of applause which must have made Mr. Hitchcock feel as Handel must have done when his Hallelujah Chorus received its ovation. Had not Mr. Hitchcock already made his name as a producer — *Thirty-nine Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes* were his—this film would have done it. Here, once again, superlatives are appropriate, but you need a full orchestra to sound them.

As we hope you will not fail to see this film, we are not going to risk

spoiling such very good fun by telling you all about it. Of the murder, you must find out for yourself. Of the romance, you must use a little guesswork. What we can promise you, without giving away any of the game, is brilliant dialogue and superb acting. It is true of all the major parts: Jane Wyman as the student of dramatic art, natural and apparently artless as she was in *Johnny Belinda*; Marlene Dietrich, just right as the musical comedy actress, a little foreign and very deep, dictatorial, charming and sinister; Michael Wilding as the most



Jane Wyman, Michael Wilding, Alastair Sim

amiable and well mannered of detectives such as any decent girl would fall for; Richard Todd as the man suspected of murder, for whom we become so concerned and sympathetic. But the excellence does not remain with them — the minor parts are perfectly cast and magnificently executed. Alastair Sim and Sybil Thorndike give an interesting and amusing study of an elderly husband and wife who cannot hit it off and have to live separated most of the time. Who could have been more typical of all the "Nellies" who are cockney maid servants than Kay Walsh? Who could have been more appalling than Miles Malleon as the "Bibulous Gent"? Appalling he was, and appalling he was

meant to be. And who could have been more frightfully priceless than Joyce Grenfell as the lady shooting gallery attendant at a charity garden party? A grand team this, and what fun!

This is all very well unless a critic must criticise. Is it his job to find fault? If so he has a hard job here. He could say that the plot was a trifle far-fetched. But what does that matter? He could say that this sort of thing has been seen many times before. But it is done with originality and never more brilliantly. He could complain that Miss Deitrich's song was a little suggestive, but even that was a clever satire on that sort of thing. What, no criticisms? Not one! G.

Kay Walsh
as Nellie the
maid



ADIEU LEONARD

Starring: Pierre Brasseur, Charles Trenet, Carette and Jacqueline Pouvier. **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd. **Director:** Pierre Prevert. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 73 minutes.

For the first twenty minutes of this film the audience of press critics was laughing unrestrainedly. Then the laughs died away and only feeble risible reactions marked its development. Another example to prove my contention that rarely can a comedy maintain its laughter-level for more than two reels of film. Consequently, if the film is to last for nine or ten reels, it has to be filled with something that is often far from funny and generally detracts from the real merit of the comedy.

Leonard is a little Chaplinesque (Monsieur Verdoux vintage) Frenchman who, as a result of his wife's extravagant patronage of the arts and artists, is driven to crime in order to maintain his family. His ineffectual attempts to commit robbery land him in the hands of a blackmailer, who tries to compel him to kill an unwanted relative who turns out to be a rather lovable lunatic.

Carette as Leonard and Charles Trenet as the guileless fool, are a pleasing pair and the film, though not the highest flight of French comedy, is suitably entertaining for this hot weather.

V.

DANCE HALL

Starring: Donald Houston, Bonar Colleano, Natasha Parry, Jane Hylton, Petula Clark and Diana Dors. A Michael Balcon Production. **Director:** Charles Crichton. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 80 minutes approx.

It is surprising what films can do to one's education. In the past two years I have become quite knowledgeable about cycling clubs, dirt-track racing, speedway racing, dog racing,

and how to become a jazz trumpeter. Now I feel my education is completed for I know what goes on inside those imposing edifices labelled "Palais de Danse". Ealing Studios, faithful to the London scene, have introduced us to a composite version of all the "Palaces" you ever saw and placed within it a selection of habituées, including the "nice young things" from the local factory as well as the "dance hall wolf", who thinks he is irresistible. Add to this two first class dance bands (or should I call them "orchestras"?), Geraldo and Ted Heath in charge, a series of love stories, a smashing fight in the mud and the rain, a ball-room dancing competition and what more could you expect?

All the youngsters named above look attractive: one or two of them also try their hand at acting, but it is not that sort of film so all you have to do, if you like dance halls, is just to sit and look. It will not do you any harm. Come to think of it, one young married couple get into a marital scrape and talk of divorce; that is silly: divorce is not a cure for anything, least of all, marriage. But they think better of it, and so should we.

V.

AND BABY MAKES THREE

Starring: Robert Young and Barbara Hale, with Robert Hutton, Jane Carter and Billie Burke. A Columbia Picture. **Director:** Robert Lord. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 84 minutes.

A sense of humour is an intangible quality about which it is dangerous to debate too dogmatically. What may be a fit subject for humour is, on the other hand, very largely a matter of good taste. Of all subjects, that of maternity and child-birth seem to me to require the most delicate touch if the treatment is not to be dismissed as being in definitely bad taste. In my view, this film belongs to the latter category.

A young woman, whose divorced husband is seeking a suitable partner to enable him to claim part custody of their unborn child, becomes jealous of

her ex-husband's second choice. In order to frighten off her successor, she pretends that she is expecting triplets. This has the result of scaring her own second choice in the matrimonial stakes, as well as causing her husband's fiancée (who has discovered the truth) to publish this startling story in the press. In fact she has been told that she is not to have a child at all. Her eventual reunion with her ex-husband is accomplished to the tune of rejoicings that baby will not, after all, make three.

The old-fashioned mutterings of her medical uncle that marriage should be for always are not enough to counter-balance the completely materialistic and basically unfunny attitude of the wife and her friends towards the most sacred functions of man and wife. These things *can* be smiled at, but only safely when they are supported by the Faith.

The acting of the principal characters is as efficient as you would expect them to be.

V.

IN THE NAME OF THE LAW (In Nome Della Legge)

Starring: Massimo Girotti, Charles Vanel, Saro Urzi and Jone Salinas. **A Lux Film. Director:** Petro Germi. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 103 minutes.

This film is regarded by the Italian critics as only just inferior to *Bicycle Thieves*. Though it has similar merits: down-to-earth realism, no concessions to studio conventions, a raw, bleak camera work that accentuates its actuality, it does not, in my opinion, reach the peak of tragic, factual integrity attained by De Sica's conscience-searing commentary on the present scene.

It is unusual among modern Italian films in that it not only poses a problem: the difficulties of life under the Mafia, in which the strongest arm wields the law; but also proposes the solution: that no one may claim to be a law unto himself; there can be only one law in a well-governed State, that administered by the State for the people.

The story concerns the efforts of a young magistrate to establish law in a district in Sicily in which corruption and the rule of the Mafia have made a mockery of justice. The film begins grimly and continues to the end on the same grim note. The young magistrate, sombrely played by Massimo Girotti, clings to his post in spite of temptation, intimidation and attempted murder. The leader of the Mafia, played with great dignity by Charles Vanel, eventually acknowledges the right of law and offers his services to hand over a criminal "in the name of the law". This final conversion of the Mafia comes a little too readily to be entirely convincing, but it puts the seal on what is, in fact, a welcome lesson in the need of law and order as a requisite for the well-being of the community.

This is certainly a film to be seen by those interested in the development of the Italian post-war cinema.

V.

LOUISA

Starring: Spring Byington, Edmund Gwenn, Charles Coburn.
Director: Alexander Hall.
Producer: Robert Arthur. **A Universal International Picture.**
Certificate: U. **Category:** C.
Running time: 90 minutes.

As a piece of unpretentious light entertainment this picture succeeds very well. Although Ronald Reagan and Ruth Hussey are billed as stars, the picture really belongs to the three players referred to above, who show extremely well what can happen when an elderly and charming widow receives the attentions of two elderly and no doubt equally charming men. It causes great embarrassment to the lady's son and daughter-in-law, but particularly to her granddaughter, aged 17, who, having her fourth boy friend in tow, knows all about love and thinks her grandmother should know better. This is real family entertainment, and the family atmosphere seems quite genuine. One feels (though who can tell these days?) that the director must himself be a happily married man.

U.

Father of the Bride

Starring: Spencer Tracy, Joan Bennett, Elizabeth Taylor, Don Taylor. **Producer:** Pandro S. Berman. **Director:** Vincente Minnelli. Presented by M.-G.-M. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 92 minutes.*

As I left the cinema I heard one woman exclaim, "Wasn't it nice". And another reply: "Wasn't it lovely". Although spoken in the strangulated accents of refinement, the words will be typical of the reactions

of the Mrs. Browns and Mrs. Smiths the world over.

No bullets, corpses or marriage tangles in this film! The appeal is simpler and deeper—the marriage of a young man and young woman. It is seen through the eyes of the bride's father, a successful and almost femininely articulate lawyer. There is plenty of comedy, yet the primary appeal, that will make people want to see it again, is that it is about a wedding: everybody loves a wedding. People will stand for hours to watch one, they will distract themselves with worry preparing for one and they will pawn their estate to pay for it. In their impecunuity they will blame the

Spencer
Tracy plays
his part
superbly



cost of living, the vagaries of race-horses or the longevity of Uncle Potts; but never the cost of the wedding. *Mutatis mutandis*, as the lawyer said when he was told that he was eating lamb cutlet; no doubt the same could be said of funerals.

The father (Spencer Tracy) learns over the evening meal that his daughter (Elizabeth Taylor) is in love and is going to marry somebody of the name of Buckley. He conjures up in his mind all the young men who have been paying court to his daughter and each prospect disturbs him profoundly: which of them could it be? There follow the preliminaries of marriage: the visit to the prospective

in-laws and so on. It ends with the marriage (I appreciated the slow jig of the bridesmaids up the aisle) and the wedding reception with its air of alcoholic gaiety. On such occasions I have thought of the man who cracked a bottle of champagne over the head of a fellow guest saying, "Consider yourself launched," and have half expected to see it happen again.

Spencer Tracy plays his part superbly. Joan Bennett has comparatively little acting to do as the mother, but she is every bit as real as Tracy. Elizabeth and Don Taylor are well cast as the young people who are the cause of all the turmoil.

T.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 5 and 6)

<i>All The King's Men</i>	(B) (147)
<i>Ambush</i>	(B) (181)
<i>Always Leave Them Laughing</i>	(A) (149)
<i>Appointment With Danger</i>	(B) (139)
<i>Bagdad</i>	(B) (109)
<i>Ballad of Berlin, The</i>	(B) (182)
<i>Big Wheel, The</i>	(B) (140)
<i>Black Magic</i>	(B) (149)
<i>Bride For Sale</i>	(B) (146)
<i>Bridge of the Ford</i>	(B) (148)
<i>Capture, The</i>	(B) (182)
<i>Champagne For Caesar</i>	(C) (181)
<i>Chance of a Lifetime</i>	(B) (172)
<i>Dancing in the Dark</i>	(B) (139)
<i>Dancing Years, The</i>	(B) (150)
<i>Dividing Line, The</i>	(A) (183)
<i>East Side, West Side</i>	(A) (182)
<i>Guilt Is My Shadow</i>	(B) (180)
<i>Holy Year</i>	(C) (178)
<i>Inspector General, The</i>	(C) (142)

<i>Jour de Fête</i>	(C) (181)
<i>Last Holiday</i>	(B) (179)
<i>Les Parents Terribles</i>	(A) (150)
<i>Moonrise</i>	(A) (148)
<i>Morning Departure</i>	(B) (110)
<i>No Man of Her Own</i>	(A) (180)
<i>Oh, You Beautiful Doll</i>	(B) (146)
<i>On the Town</i>	(175)
<i>One Way Street</i>	(A) (172)
<i>Out of the Darkness</i>	(C) (115)
<i>Outpost in Morocco</i>	(B) (147)
<i>Prelude to Fame</i>	(B) (174)
<i>Reluctant Widow, The</i>	(B) (179)
<i>Retour A La Vie</i>	(A) (173)
<i>Should Parents Tell?</i>	(A) (146)
<i>South of St. Louis</i>	(175)
<i>Stars in My Crown</i>	(C) (139)
<i>State Secret</i>	(177)
<i>Stratton Story, The</i>	(B) (183)
<i>Three Came Home</i>	(A) (108)
<i>They Were Not Divided</i>	(B) (144)
<i>Under My Skin</i>	(A) (141)
<i>Young Man of Music</i>	(A) (140)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Happiest Days of your Life, The</i>	(A) (108)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Red Danube, The</i>	(A) (112)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B) (80)
<i>The Search</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

CHILDREN AND THE CINEMA

By the Hon. Mrs. Robert Bower

Mrs. Bower, former National President of Britain's Union of Catholic Mothers, was the only Catholic of the British Government-appointed committee to study the problem of child attendance at the cinema. She refused to accept the committee's general finding that films are not primarily responsible for the delinquency and moral laxity of children under sixteen and that deeper, subtler and more various influences are at work.

Here is my chance, and I am going to take it in a big way, to say thank you first and foremost to the Catholic Film Institute, and in particular to its officers and the brilliant Editor of *Focus* and the panel of priest reviewers, whose excellent reviews I could pass around to my colleagues with such pride and confidence; I thank them for all the unknown help they gave me in the many problems that confronted the Committee which has just issued its report, after more than two years' work, on the various aspects of the problems affecting children who go to the cinema.

Let me give just one example. When we were considering Category X, namely the creation of a category for films such as those about white slavery and euthanasia and also those films which were both brutal and sadistic and, therefore, unsuitable for children, how valuable it was to be able to refer to those reviews which appeared from time to time, placing it beyond doubt that there were films which should never have been made because of their sadism or other equally grave moral reasons! Apart from the reviews, the varied and excellent articles appearing in *Focus* often threw fresh light upon some of the problems troubling the Committee. The famous "Disputation" broadcast last January, highlighting as it did in cogent argument, the power of the cinema for good, and its capability of reaching a high art form, leads me

straight to my final tribute to Very Rev. Father Hilary Carpenter, O.P., Chairman of the Catholic Film Institute. The excellence of this broadcast made him my friend in need. Once I discovered that I was the only Catholic member, it added greatly to my responsibilities, the more so when I found myself alone in dissent, on the power and effect of the cinema being greater than my colleagues were prepared to admit. Fr. Hilary's broadcast was a powerful weapon put into my hands.

In this brief article, I have asked myself a question: What do I consider to be the most valuable work the Committee has done? I would say without hesitation "focussing" public opinion on the crying need to cater specially for children in a proper manner, by disclosing that this is not done by just providing children with what are called special children's shows, exclusive to children, and held at different times to the ordinary cinema. What matters most is what children see at these shows. The Committee found that "many deplorable films were being shown". On this point a cinema attendant has written to me this week as follows: "I am shocked and disgusted at the wicked and brutal films they are showing to these children, we watch the reactions of these children and believe me it is something terrible . . . we had to go round and calm them."

In my opinion the pitch of fright



No film should be made which does this . . .

caught in the *Picture Post* photographs is not *uncommon* but a fairly *common* occurrence. In real life a mother instinctively shields her child from the sight of a road accident, and how right this is, is shown by children at these films covering their faces with their hands or their coats or otherwise getting their heads down when the strain is too great.

The problem of finding the ways and means to provide children with the films that they should see is a tremendous one. Public opinion has been "focussed"; it has now got to be *roused*. The readers of *Focus* can play a vital and important part in this "rousing". At least the recommendation of the new Category X needs no money; it needs only legislation to stop children from seeing the worst of films. **The most moving of all pleas in support of this category, as well as anxiety about advisory A, has reached me from an ex-approved schoolboy, now a man who has made good. He writes that he had a "good home" only that he was "bunged off**

to the cinema too often". He never sold or disposed of anything that he stole, his interest consisted in imitating "new angles" seen on the films; he saw some films twice to make sure how to do it. Even his escape from the approved school was "film inspired". He would like to see not only Category X but Advisory A, as at present, rigorously enforced.

Readers of *Focus* are just the ones who should put before their local M.P.s the need and urgency to implement the report; but first study the report and become familiar with the recommendations. I have tried to make this possible and simple in my booklet "Children in the Cinema". It will be a handy book to pass to M.P.s and I would like to see them getting a steadily growing, not spasmodic, pile of letters and copies of this booklet to urge them to do their stuff and to do it quickly. As regards money, at least the tax that children pay should be refunded for the making of suitable films for them



Children need plenty of fun and laughter

to see. That would be a start. I wrote that it would be a tragedy of great social consequences if the Rank Organisation were to cease the production of special films for children; before the printer's ink had dried that tragedy had happened. Not, however, before the secret of making and testing children's reactions to film incidents had been brought to perfection by infra-red photography. There is much, so much, for Focus readers to do. Apathy to be overcome, new support to be obtained. Let me give you an example in what way this can be done; after reading only the skeleton script, and with only the possibility of illustrations, W. H. Smith made a place for my booklet on or through their bookstalls and opened other channels for me. From the passages marked in red ink, it was plain to see that it was the realisation of the children's crying need, their RIGHT to be better and happily provided for, without being frightened or

scandalised, that had won the day. Will Focus readers please make this cause their own, and start right now to prepare for the fray? It will be a long struggle. I shall be very glad to hear of any constructive suggestions and action taken by readers.

I hold a set of ten photographs taken for our Committee but which were not seen by me until after the report had been published and my booklet had been printed. They are of the greatest possible interest as to the power of the cinema and are taken by infra red ray and show what the children are seeing. I want to publish these in a second edition of my booklet and Focus readers could help to make this speedily possible if only a thousand of them would order a dozen copies and get permission to sell them at church doors. The first edition republishes the pictures of fright from *Picture Post*. Orders of over a dozen may be obtained at the wholesale rate of 9d. each from Johns Ltd., Printers, Newport, Mon.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer,
the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.*

Every Good Wish!

Sir,

We are all of the opinion that Focus is one of the best film magazines published in the English language. Your reviews are just; and in nine cases out of ten correspond with our own views of the films we have seen—mostly 16mm. prints distributed for the Navy and the Army.

With every good wish for the success and wide distribution of your publication,

Very sincerely yours,

ALBERT J. COONEY, S.J.

Principal,

Wah Yan College,

Robinson Road,

Hong Kong.

Grateful Thanks

Sir,

As this country is celebrating the Feast of St. Jeanne D'Arc all this week, it is perhaps not inappropriate to recall that it is thanks to Victor Fleming's film of Joan that a good many film-goers are aware of the great saint. And what of the inspired portrayal by Ingrid Bergman? The film is still advertised in Orleans at the moment. Yet the Pharisees are busy pointing their fingers and raising their hands in pious condemnation. Drawing an extreme parallel, it is true, St. Jeanne herself knew much about the mercury called popularity. At least one C.F.I. member offers his grateful thanks for what he considers the film experience of 1950, and has remembered Miss Bergman at Orleans on St. Jeanne's Feast Day and at Rouen today.

VINCENT C. GRIFFITHS.

Rouen.

Focus Format

Sir,

May I reassure your correspondent W. D. Appleby by saying that the

Editorial team responsible for Focus are only too acutely aware of its typographical and other shortcomings. You, as Editor, can bear witness that each of our meetings is an occasion for dreams of future splendour. Two things prevent our dreams coming to pass: lack of financial support; comparative lack of interest on the part of the Catholic cinema-going public. Perhaps the two are reducible to the latter. If only those who frequent the cinemas regularly would realise the power they could wield, if they would help to make Focus the really influential organ of film opinion that it might be!

Meanwhile, we keep our heads above water (just about) and try to reach as many of the public as we can by means of personal recommendation. Of course, we know that the fan magazines have glossy covers and count their readers in tens of thousands, whereas we are still counting in thousands, but then, most of their readers are of the nit-wit variety who like to be told the colour of Betty Grable's hair and the number of husbands used up by Rita Hayworth and what make of dentifrice is favoured by Alan Ladd. I suppose that there will always be more of that kind than of those for whom we conceive that we are writing, but even now, if each of our present readers were to obtain one other we should be able to do some of the things your correspondent envisages.

I do not agree about the size of Focus. I think it should be larger rather than smaller. The colour scheme adopted during the past few months is the result of the recommendation of an expert in the psychological impact of certain colours upon uncertain customers. Unfortunately not all our expert friends are in agreement!

Yours faithfully,

J. A. V. BURKE.

FILMS FOR THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

British Electric Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, W.C.2.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 211 Piccadilly, W.1.

G.B. Instructional, Ltd., 1 Aintree Road, Perivale, Greenford, Middx.

Gateway Film Library, 9 Edward Close, St. Albans, Herts.

What is Electricity?

British Electric Development Association. 16mm. Free Loan. (13 minutes.)

Part I illustrates the outstanding discoveries which led to the development and use of the "electric current". Part II provides the answer to the question in the film's title—and does so very competently. The conception of matter as consisting of atoms, each in turn consisting of a nucleus and revolving electrons, leads on to the idea of electric current as a movement of electrons. The function of copper as a conductor, especially the reason for its suitability, is particularly well brought out.

Electro-Chemistry

B.E.D.A. 16mm. Free Loan. (19 minutes.)

This film starts with the consideration of the parts of a new bicycle lamp owned by a fifteen-year-old boy. The plating on the lamp is the starting point for explaining, in terms of electrons, the ionisation of salts in solution, and the behaviour of the ions under the influence of an electric current. Primary and secondary cells are explained and the production of aluminium and the refining of copper by electrical methods.

Suitability: Grammar and Technical Schools, 15+; General interest, 16+.

Mechanisms of Breathing

Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, 234 UC. Sound. 1 reel. Hire: 7s. 6d. first day, 2s. 6d. each subsequent day.

As the name suggests, this film is concerned with the function and significance of breathing and with the mechanisms employed by the body in carrying out this vital process.

The anatomy of the respiratory structures and the path of inhalation and exhalation are first shown, together with the mechanical factors which operate in gaseous exchange. Then, by means of animated diagrams, the part which the blood plays in respiration is illustrated. Moving discs represent the red corpuscles and the rôle of diffusion in the passage of oxygen and carbon-dioxide between blood and lungs is extremely well shown.

Still using the same method of illustration to very good effect, we are shown how the muscles and nerves concerned in the respiratory mechanism are controlled by the unconscious part of the brain. Lastly, some derangements of the respiratory machinery, such as pneumonia and suffocation from drowning or carbon-monoxide poisoning are dealt with and the use of artificial respiration is illustrated.

The film is very useful as giving a good general picture of the process of respiration. It deals only with external respiration and neglects internal respiration and the release of energy, but the title of the film does not justify us in expecting a fuller treatment.

Body Defences Against Disease

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 232 UC. Sound. 1 reel. Hire: as above.

This film first deals in a general way with the social and economic

problems caused by disease and then shows in some detail how disease bacteria may enter the system, and the three lines of defence within the body, viz., the skin and mucous membranes, the lymphatic system and the production of anti-bodies. The structure of the skin is very well shown and also the process of phagocytosis.

Useful for Biology, Physiology or Hygiene Teaching to Seniors. 14+.

Care of the Feet

Encyclopedia Britannica, 130. 1 reel. Sound. Hire : as above.

This film is somewhat like a "cautionary tale". Distressing abnormalities of foot physiology are shown with much technical detail of foot anatomy and weight distribution. The treatment of these disorders is dealt with and the importance of well-fitting shoes is emphasised.

Not suitable for general use in school. Possibly useful for work on deportment in Physical Education; would interest some adults or seniors taking specialised courses in Hygiene or Anatomy.

Exploring the Universe

Encyclopedia Britannica, 161 UC. Sound. 1 reel. Hire : as above.

This film is concerned chiefly with the distant stars and nebulae. It would require much preliminary reading or discussion, but would have an appeal for some Sixth Formers.

Atomic Energy

Encyclopedia Britannica, 370. Sound. 1 reel. Hire : as above.

This is a really useful film. With animated drawings it explains the concepts needed for the understanding of the structure of the atom. It shows clearly the differences between electronic or chemical energy and nuclear energy and explains the three known ways in which energy is released: natural radio-activity, nuclear synthesis, and nuclear fission. Finally it brings out very clearly the relationship between atomic energy from the sun and the chemical energy stored in photo-synthesis and released in combustion.

Useful for Grammar and Technical School, 14+; General Interest, 16+.

Simple Machines

Encyclopedia Britannica, 251. Sound. 1 reel. Hire : as above.

Man is shown employing simple machines like the inclined plane, the lever, the wedge, the screw and the pulley to do work. The fact is emphasised that industrial machinery of all types is made up of such simple machines.

One of the most useful things in this film is the clear illustration of what the unit of work—the foot pound—means.

Suitable as an introduction to mechanics or for revision purposes, Grammar and Technical Schools, 12-16.

Fundamentals of Acoustics

Encyclopedia Britannica, 260 UC. Sound. 1 reel. Hire : as above.

This is a most interesting and useful film in which the sound track admirably illustrates the principles conveyed visually. Good use is made of animated diagrams. By this means, the rather intricate structure and functioning of the ear is shown very simply and clearly.

Then by another animated basic diagram the sensitivity of the human ear is explained. The range of both frequency and volume are shown in the diagram and while the commentator speaks, changes in the pattern can be noted when low and high frequencies are in turn eliminated. The differences in the patterns for band music, both distant and near, are also observed. Lastly, the film considers the action of sound waves indoors. The influence of hard, non-absorbent surfaces is contrasted with that of soft, absorbent surfaces.

Suitability: Grammar or Technical Schools, 15-18.

The Life-Story of a Tadpole

G.B.I., F 727. Sound. 1 reel. Hire : 7s. 6d. first day. Also : L.C.C., 64.

This is a condensed and more elementary treatment of the two-reel film "The Life History of the Frog". Mating of the male and female frogs and spawning is shown and then development of the tadpole until metamorphosis is complete and the tiny frog begins its life on land.

The photography is excellent and

the commentary clear and simple. Emphasis is well laid on the changes which occur in the feeding habits and method of respiration during the life history.

Suitability: Juniors, or as a revision for Seniors.

The following G.B.I. productions are at present only produced in 35mm. copies, but will later be reduced to 16mm.

Light

- I. First Principles of Reflection. (9 minutes.)
- II. Spherical Mirrors. (11 minutes.)
- III. Refraction. (5½ minutes.)
- IV. Lenses. (9¼ minutes.)

The presentation is extremely clear in all parts and they would prove a very useful aid to teaching.

Suitability: Grammar and Technical Schools, 14+.

Sound

- I. Introduction to Sound. (9 minutes.)
- II. Sound Waves. (9 minutes.)
- III. Speed of Sound. (6 minutes.)
- IV. Musical Notes. (11 minutes.)

In the second reel the difference between transverse and longitudinal waves and in the last reel the part played by overtones in music are particularly well brought out. Much use could certainly be made of this film.

Suitability: as above.

Circulation

- L.C.C., 38. Sound. 2 reels. Also G.B.I., FC 992.

This is a complementary film to *Breathing and Blood* in the same series.

It is an excellent teaching film and shows very clearly the structure of the heart and the mechanism by which the double circulation is maintained. Very good use is made of animated diagrams. The "jerky" flow of blood in the arteries and the smooth flow in the veins is illustrated in an amusing way; crowds of people dismounting from successive buses and all streaming towards the same turnstile, represent

the discontinuous flow of the arterial blood whilst the turnstile represents the capillary system through which, after a certain amount of hold up, a smooth and continuous stream emerges.

Useful for revision work or as an introduction to heart structure and the circulation of the blood.

Suitability: Grammar and Technical Schools, 14+.

Black Tin

Gateway, D 117. Sound. 1 reel.

Hire: 7s. 6d. first day, 2s. 6d. each subsequent day.

This film shows the processing of the tin ore, cassiterite, into the tin oxide or black tin.

The historical aspects of tin mining in Cornwall are indicated by shots of an outcrop and old engine houses.

A diagram of rock cross section shows the position of the veins of tin, and there is a model of a mine shaft.

Having seen the various types of drills being tested above ground and stills of their use in the mine, we are shown the huge pump which drains the mine.

The processing begins with the crushing of the ore by jawbreakers. We follow the ore along to the Frue vanner, where valuable materials are separated from the worthless by virtue of their difference in density. Wolframite, and other magnetic materials of approximately the same density as tin, are separated from it by passing the ore through successively stronger magnetic fields. Diagrams are given for both methods.

The black tin, produced by roasting the "tin concentrate" remaining after these processes, is packed into bags.

This film is useful because of the detailed treatment of the standard methods of mineral separation; but the subject must be well prepared beforehand for full understanding.

Very good notes available.

Suitability: Sixth Form Science.

CORRECTION

The Cover Personality for the May issue of FOCUS was written by Joseph Galea.—The Editor regrets the misprint.

Cover Personality

JEREMY
SPENSER

This should really be an article about Jeremy's mother, for it is she who emerges as the sane, wise, unemotional guide and friend to a talented little boy who might so easily take the wrong path, artistically and ethically, were he not also fortunate in having so talented and devoted a mother.

When I met Mrs. Spenser and Jeremy at the flat of a mutual friend, I was at once struck by the fact that Jeremy is so level-headed, and a little conversation with Mrs. Spenser soon made me aware of the source of this quality. He is also a polite and well-mannered boy, willing to turn at once from the kittens with which he was delightedly playing to answer the possibly wearisome questions I put to him. On the other hand, while his mother and I were discussing Jeremy in particular, and films in general, he continued quietly to absorb himself with a toy. It is a tribute to the way he has been brought up that he did not, as so many other children in similar circumstances would have done, interrupt our conversation with precocious and self-centred remarks.

I asked Jeremy whether he preferred the films to the stage in view of the fact that he and his elder brother David Spenser have done a deal of broadcasting. He was quite definite about his preference for the cinema though David, on the other hand, prefers the stage and radio. David, by the way, was the original William in the B.B.C. "Just William". Jeremy takes a very professional interest in the technique of film making and had a number of very intelligent things to say about the film which has brought him fame. He enjoyed making it very much and though he is not really as proficient on the piano as the film made him appear to be, he is genuinely interested in music and took a great deal of trouble in learning the music by heart, as well as the appropriate gestures in conducting it. It is very much to his credit as an actor that he conveyed the impression that he was actually in charge of the orchestra and really interpreting the music. In fact his skill in this direction may very

well lead one to suspect the genuineness of the other young gentlemen who, during the past two years, have astonished the musical world with their prodigious feats in wielding the conductor's baton!

Jeremy is twelve years old, and prior to his appearance in *Prelude to Fame* played small parts in *Anna Karenina*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *The Dancing Years*, *The Spider and the Fly* and *Portrait of Clare*.

He is being educated by his mother, who is a trained teacher. He was, for a time a pupil at the Westminster Cathedral Choir School. He is a Boy Scout, though, as he told me, film work does not leave him a great deal of time to attend Patrol and Troop Meetings. He has also written some novels which, he hopes, will soon be published. I hope Jeremy will not be too annoyed with me if I suggest that it might be a good thing to wait until he is a little older before he perpetuates his literary efforts in print. One's standards become more critical as one grows older and it is often the case that one can be profoundly ashamed of the things that fond parents have preserved from the early days of one's artistic flowering!

One always feels a certain anxiety at the fate waiting for child film actors. The life of the studio is so unreal and so far removed from what is normal or balanced, that it is no surprise to learn that as they grow older and find themselves less in demand, they get into temperamental and artistic difficulties. This is much more the case with American film children. The life in Hollywood is much more artificial than it is in this country. Nevertheless, it is true to say in both cases that if a talented child retains his sense of proportion and eventually makes good as an adult player, it is very largely due to wise home guidance. This, I am sure, is what makes it certain that Jeremy Spenser will have an interesting and creative career as a child actor and will later develop into an adult player worth watching.

JOHN VINCENT.

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National Film Reviewing Office

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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REV. JOHN A. V. BURKE, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews,
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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

AUGUST 1950

No. 8

Negative and Positive

(I)

There is a sequence in the film *Odette* which seems to lay bare the heart of Nazism and, by implication, one may suppose, lays bare the heresy of Communism. When *Odette* has suffered torture in a way that only the truly noble can suffer torture, she is visited by the Catholic prison chaplain, a German, who asks her whether there is some little service he can render her; she replies that she would like him to say Mass for her, whereupon he affirms that such a request would never be granted by the authorities. *Odette* looks the priest in the face: "Are they so afraid of God", she says with biting emphasis.

Today, men who hate God because they fear Him, gloomily and openly strut across the world. It is not surprising that their gloomy gospel has penetrated the cinema. The other day it fell to my lot to review a film which was stiff with hate and fear; at no time was there even a glimmer of any of the Christian virtues of charity, love and tolerance and the story concludes with a cruel murder.

(II)

Some time ago I received a letter from a reader of *FOCUS* who describes himself as: "A friend of The Catholic Film Institute". Among other things he writes "... I believe that The Catholic Film Institute will really get going when it goes into production, and when it does go into production I believe that it will receive the support of every Christian in the country".

"When it goes into production." By those words I presume our friend means when The Catholic Film Institute begins to make films.

We are pleased to announce that The Catholic Film Institute in this country has made its first full-length factual film which records in simple and telling film-language the amazing facts of Fatima.

It will be reviewed in due course, but I will be permitted to say that in a world grown musty and morbid with materialism, this supernatural film-story is like a breath of sweet, clean air. **It has something to say. It reminds us that we have been given a supernatural weapon which if used will bring peace to the world.**

EDITOR.

An Urgent Appeal For Catholic Action

At the recent General Council meeting of the International Catholic Film Office held in Rome, it was regretfully decided that unless there can be a very definite increase in the circulation of the English edition of the *International Film Review*, it must cease publication.

This is a double tragedy. It is sad to think that the only truly international film review should be unable to find enough English readers to keep it going; it is even more distressing that the only review really attempting to develop the Christian philosophy of the art of film should be unable to find enough Catholics interested in the religious and artistic aspects of the cinema to support its modest requirements to keep it in existence.

Let it not be thought that the *International Film Review* is just one more in the large list of glamorous cinema publications. It is the only journal seriously approaching the problems presented by the cinema, both morally and artistically, from an international point of view. It has recently been honoured with a series of recommendations from personalities of the highest competence in every walk of life.

From Mgr. Montini, of the Vatican Secretariat of State, we received the following letter. Addressed to the President of the International Catholic Cinema Office, it reads as follows:

"You are not unaware of the warm interest with which the Holy Father follows the work and development of the O.C.I.C. Recently, on the occasion of the General Council Meeting of your Office in London, it was my pleasure to confirm this attitude which the Head of the Church has towards you.

"But an organisation such as yours owes it to itself to have a special publication at its service, and at this time, as the *International Film Review* enters its second year, I am able to tell you that the Holy See sends encouragement to your work and hopes for the develop-

ment of your periodical. This review, with its fine format and serious content, aims, in effect, to respond on the international plane to the need that you have felt to express with faith and knowledge the Catholic point of view in the problems which the development of the cinema has set the world of today. . . . One cannot but hope that, while in no way supplanting national publications, your review is obtaining the circulation that is merited by the cause it serves."

From the two ladies who are, without doubt, the most influential film critics in this country we have pleasure in publishing these testimonials. C. A. Lejeune, of *The Observer*, writes: "I am very happy indeed to have the chance to say a few words about *International Film Review*. In my opinion it provides, together with *Focus*, a more sensible assessment of film values than any other magazine at present obtainable in English. What I like so much about it is its sanity. It is wise without being priggish; neither writes 'up nor writes down; but manages to impart and invite intelligence without ever falling into the trap of abstraction.

"No other review, to my knowledge, provides such a full and balanced picture of the state of film in the world today, and I particularly like the care it gives to the needs of children in the cinema. A really splendid job."

Miss Dilys Powell, of the *Sunday Times*, writes, "I have read *International Film Review* with interest and am impressed by the range of the material and the high standard of its criticism. It seems to me that the serious student of the cinema should find much here which he cannot afford to neglect."

From our English Hierarchy we have had many encouraging letters. May I quote as typical the letter of the Bishop of Menevia. His Lordship says: "May I say how important it is that the English-speaking Catholic world should have as much information as possible,

from a Catholic standpoint, of the work of the cinema. For that reason, I welcome the *International Film Review* and I hope that it will succeed in capturing the attention not only of the Catholic educational world, professionally speaking, but of all the clergy, teachers (religious and lay), and of all those whose work influences and directs Catholic life and thought.

"The film is undoubtedly one of the greatest formative influences in modern society and I feel that we as Catholics have not yet realised its tremendous possibilities as a christianising medium.

"The *International Film Review* should do very much towards enlivening our interest and quickening our enthusiasm in the 'Apostolate of the Film'."

After these eloquent and generous tributes from such exalted sources, will you allow this invaluable contribution to Catholic film culture to disappear for the want of a little energy and enthusiasm?

There are two main reasons why it has been difficult to bring the English edition to the circulation point necessary as a minimum for publication: (1) the Board of Trade regulation forbidding periodicals printed in English in Luxembourg to be imported into this country in bulk; (2) the unwillingness of American Catholic film interests to advertise the review. The first difficulty might possibly be overcome if the review could be printed in France (it is impossible to print it in England; the cost would be prohibitive for so small a circulation).

The second difficulty derives from the policy of our friends in the States who are afraid that a Catholic review dealing with the artistic merits of films might detract from their single-minded purpose of providing a purely moral guide to films

and allowing no consideration of any other kind to deflect them. That, of course, is entirely a matter for the U.S.A. It becomes evident, therefore, that if this review is to be saved for the sake of those who think that Catholics have something to contribute to the art of cinema along the philosophical and artistic line also, it is for Catholics in England to rally round loyally and do all they can for the review.

Recently the C.F.I. printed and distributed more than 5,000 copies of a leaflet entitled *Dare We Ignore the Cinema?* It advertised the *International Film Review* as well as *Focus* and went to every priest, convent, school and educational centre in the country. The result has been deplorably disappointing. If only every convent and college bought one copy of the *International Film Review* it would be enough to save the English edition. Is it too much to hope that our educational authorities are sufficiently awake to the dangers and possibilities of the cinema to accept the Holy Father's invitation to see that this review "is obtaining the circulation that its cause merits"?

It may be that £1 per annum is too expensive for the purses of those who realise the need of Catholic Film Action. Can we not then hope that several persons with similar interest may take out a collective subscription? Until the Board of Trade alters its regulations, or until the review can be printed in France, we cannot show the English edition in bulk (though the Board of Trade will allow you to have as many copies in French or Spanish as you wish!). But we can promise that a specimen copy will be sent gratis to you if you will send us your name and address. Do please help this important work for the bettering of films to continue.

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FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 7—THE EDUCATIONAL FILM

Today, "visual aids" in education receive such prominence that it would be excusable to regard them as new, whereas films for educational purposes have been in circulation during the last twenty-five years. However, it is only since the last war that serious steps have been taken in this country to equip schools with projectors, and supply them with the right kind of teaching films, and film strips.

Unexpectedly, the educational film bristles with problems. First, there is the film-maker's attitude towards it. If he has wide technical experience in making films for public consumption, he will probably regard the production of an educational film as the simplest job in the world, but unless he has studied the art of teaching, he will find it the most difficult, because it needs to be so simple. In this specialised field, it is not enough to be technically proficient. Indeed, many usual practices must be forgotten, for the teaching film demands neither swift tempo, clever camera angles, trick effects, nor dramatic lighting. Instead, it needs to be presented slowly. Every scene must be straightforward, and, above all, the film should never be overloaded with facts and figures, for these cannot be easily memorised. On the other hand, the teacher should learn as much as possible about film production, and how to present teaching films to the best advantage. Apart from mastering projection, there is the question of introducing a film so that it becomes an integral part of a lesson, and not an additional novelty. Also, giving a talk *after* the film has been shown, with or without the aid of a film strip (which recapitulates the important points seen on the screen), needs very careful planning.

Some teachers still regard film as an intruder into the classroom which seeks

to make them redundant, whereas it can never be more than an *aid* to teaching. It is true that whilst a *sound* film is being projected, the teacher loses touch with the pupils, but the link is re-established when the film is discussed immediately after being seen. In some ways, the *silent* film is superior to the sound film, for it enables the teacher to describe the action *whilst* it is being projected.

Today, there is a plentiful supply of teaching films for all age groups, and they are giving a new meaning to geography, natural history, botany, many technical subjects, and any lessons which require to be demonstrated. Film can, by the employment of actual scenes, slow motion photography, and animated diagrams, illustrate and simplify lessons in a wonderful way. Religious instruction by film should be the next development. I am not in favour of films which present Biblical stories in the theatrical manner, though they have their uses. It is the factual film which is going to be of the greatest service to religion. Church ritual, history, training for various Vocations, religious events in other lands—all can be clarified by film. It is important, too, to realise that whilst an eminent authority on this or that subject cannot be expected to visit schools all over the country, he can, by appearing in or describing a film, actually enter every classroom possessing a projector.

Unfortunately, the educational film is the Cinderella of filmdom. Though its financial position will improve in the future, when all schools have projectors, and all teaching authorities and teachers are conscious of the value of film, today production is not a good proposition because returns are so small. Added to this, educational films have to be made within the commercial industry which is

in no way concerned with the purpose for which a film is produced, and applies the same high costs to all subjects. Consequently, films for the classroom not only cost more than they should, but earn less than all other films.

In time it will be realised that films for this most important purpose should be

made by groups of trained educational film-makers, unrelated to the main commercial industry, working on an economical scale proportionate to the educational market. The teaching of religious and secular subjects to future generations by film must not be hindered by commercialism.

No. 1—A Positive Approach to the Cinema

Parents and Films

By Major Arthur A. McLoughlin

SPOTLIGHTING THE PROBLEM

As the Roman Catholic father of four children I have been most interested in the recent Departmental Committee Report and publicity given to the subject of children and films which has spotlighted this vital matter particularly for those who had never before considered it. Fortunately for me, as a parent, I have always appreciated the good and bad potential of films, especially for children and have long exercised supervision and control in regard to the film-going habits of my own family. One of the many matters mentioned in the Departmental Committee's Report and one which has been seriously exercising the minds of the authorities in post-war years is the sad decline in juvenile morals and the blame for this state of affairs is being laid at any convenient door where, in theory at least, it can conceivably belong.

Thus, at a recent juvenile delinquency conference in one of the home counties, delegates advanced their theories as to the cause; practically everything was suggested including "Dick Barton", comics and, of course, films, and the whole provided an exhaustive list of causes. Dealing with possible remedies one lady delegate, herself a parent, suggested that tax be taken off television sets to encourage parents to buy them as a counter-attraction to the cinema for their children. **Perhaps the most practical, if revolutionary,**

remedy suggested by a delegate, however, was that parents should be **really held responsible for the behaviour of their children.** In this way, it was suggested, a juvenile arraigned before a Court would have his parents with him and they would be required to give an account of their stewardship in the upbringing of their child.

In cases similar to the "ex-approved school boy" referred to in last month's *Focus*, one can imagine the magistrate asking the parents "why was this boy allowed to go to the cinema so often; why was he continually allowed to see the type of films he did?" I feel sure that if the principle of this suggestion were generally applied today it would do more to bring down the high incidence of juvenile crime and low morals, whatever the cause or causes, than anything else I have yet heard suggested.

THE FIT PERSONS TO SUPERVISE CHILDREN'S FILMS

In regard to the effects of the film on children the Departmental Committee Report stated that "One of our hardest problems was to define and measure the effects". I am not surprised. In fact, I think it quite impossible to gauge accurately the effects of the film in general on children as a whole. The mental make-up and character-forming

machinery of children are delicate and complex things which can vary greatly as between children; the home life and other factors concerning the individual child also enter into the matter. Therefore, a film which was quite harmless to one child might well have an adverse effect on another.

If it is at all possible to decide accurately the likely effect of this type of film, or that one, on any particular child, surely only the child's parents, who are in an unrivalled position to know and understand him intimately, can do this. I consider that if my wife and I are not fit and proper persons to supervise our children's film-going habits, we have no right to the status and privilege of parenthood. The fact that films, unsuitable for juvenile consumption, are produced and that children can gain admission to see them is no excuse. Most parents would never dream of allowing their children to get hold of bad books or to keep bad company, yet many are apparently quite indifferent to the films their children see.

Emotionally, I find that my children's reactions to certain types of scenes in films are no different to those they exhibit at certain "scenes" in other forms of entertainment which they enjoy. At a Speedway Meeting, for example, I have seen them hide their eyes from an impending crash or avert their gaze from the starting line when the riders are lined-up for the start of some important race such as a cup final. The excitement when their favourite rider figures in a very close finish is only equalled by their tenseness and anxiety when he is involved in a collision. At the circus they know and have exhibited fear for the safety of the high-level tight-rope walker and trapeze artistes; they are clearly relieved when the lion tamer emerges safely from the cage and everything is soon forgotten anyway as they laugh uproariously at the antics and patter of the clowns.

There is an important point to be remembered here, however, and that is that speedway meetings are held only once a week at each track and the circus is normally only an annual event but the cinema is available every day and there are lots of them.

FILM-SAFETY CONSCIOUSNESS

Although it has long been realised that film-going was developing into a normal feature of everyday life for many people, including children, it was a surprise to learn from the Departmental Committee Report that as many as "Nine out of ten (about 6,000,000) children of school age in Great Britain go to the cinema from time to time and more than half (about 4,000,000) of them do so at least once a week". Disquieting, however, was the information "that out of a total population of 7,000,000 children between the ages of 5-15, there are 1,250,000 who attend twice a week and 550,000 three times or more often".

Over-indulgence by children is to my mind the greatest source of possible moral danger emanating from films because repetition increases enormously the power of an already powerful medium. The ex-approved schoolboy it will be remembered was "banged off to the cinema too often" and he saw some films twice in order to perfect a new "angle".

That some good parents, who would never wilfully expose their children to any suggestion of danger, do unknowingly expose them to the great moral and other dangers resulting from indiscriminate over-indulgence in film programmes is illustrated by this case: A Catholic, and exemplary mother I know allows her children to go to the cinema twice or three times a week, mostly unaccompanied, because, to use her own words, "It's safer for them there than playing in the busy streets". Safer? I wonder. This good lady is definitely road-safety conscious but what about film-safety consciousness? Certainly, as things stand today, children will only get what is good from films (and there is a lot of good to be had) providing their cinema-going is carefully supervised as it should be.

There is therefore a much needed job of work to be done in bringing this matter to the attention of all parents and what better form could this take than by publicising the work of the Catholic Film Institute? This needn't cost a lot of money for even if it were restricted in activity to a talk (or a letter read from the Cardinal or the Bishop) from the pulpit at each Mass in every Catholic church throughout

the country with membership forms and appropriate literature available at the back of the church it would, I am sure, prove very successful. Notices could be sent to the newspapers; special talks given to local organisations and local film committees or groups set up.

In this connection it would be a good thing, where possible, if a specific priest could be placed permanently in charge of the work of each parish and apart from all else he could keep the matter in front of parishioners by talks from the pulpit at regular intervals. Later, perhaps, funds could be raised to purchase a projector and then film appreciation could really go ahead with the aim of every parent becoming a film critic.

LATEST LINK IN THE CHAIN OF VISUALS

The Church has long employed "visuals" in her work and modern film is really the latest link in the chain started by her centuries ago. Our Lord Himself surely "illustrated" His work on earth by means of the parable and in so doing provided the subject for many pictorial illustrations which continue to influence and instruct children today. Then in 1223 St. Francis produced the first Christmas crib in the open air at Greccio and the wonder of the first onlookers can have been no greater than that of modern children seeing the crib for the first time. The crucifix, holy pictures, Stations of the Cross and stained glass windows are all "visuals" which the Church still successfully employs.

I would like to see more religious films. My own children are usually very impressed by a religious or supernatural film or scene, e.g., the final scene of *Joan of Arc* where the Saint is succoured in her last moments at the stake by the sight of the Crucifix, created in them a new interest and respect for the reproduction of the Crucified Christ. In *Hamlet* they were quick to note, and were duly impressed by the fact, that Laurence Olivier would not attack his intended victim because he found him kneeling in prayer. They have made reference to these two incidents several times since. On the other hand they have

been equally quick to notice that their hero or heroine in the film goes to bed or rises in the morning without saying prayers and the unsaid "Grace before meals" also proves difficult for parents to explain away. Small actions like these may escape the notice of or seem too trivial to producers but they would do a tremendous amount of good if they could be performed, particularly by children's favourite stars.

Another thing which children seize upon is the case where, for example, a star appears as a "bad-egg" in one film only to be cast in a "goody-goody" or, worse still from this point of view, a religious rôle in the next. Once children know a star is a Roman Catholic in real life he can do no wrong in their eyes; whether he knows it or not therefore he has a very great responsibility on his hands in this connection. Thus, I have heard my children stoutly defend any criticism of Bing Crosby, however mild, because "Bing's a Catholic" they say! Spencer Tracy, too, is "the tops" because of his many rôles as a priest.

Children today are becoming much more perceptive in regard to films, no doubt as a result of living in this age when visual aids, especially sound films, form part of the normal equipment of schools. At Brighton College, for example, in addition to the normal educational sessions provided, the projector is used to screen a weekly programme comprising a full length feature with supporting films.

THE REAL ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

The real answer to the question of children and films, and one which would relieve parents of much responsibility in the matter, would be the provision of a continuous supply of good films of all types with a children's interest for all ages. A sad blow, although it is to be hoped not a lethal one, to any hopes for this happy state was the recent announcement of the suspension, for economy reasons, of the fine work of the Children's Entertainment Section of the J. A. Rank Organisation.

It is obvious that with today's high salaries and costs in film production, children's films can only be made at a loss unless stars and technicians accept reduced rates of pay for this work in

view of its importance. We cannot hope in the present state, it seems, to produce special children's films at anything like the low cost (£3,000) of the first effort of Denmark. The progress of Russia is even farther beyond our immediate reach for, according to a recent report, Moscow possesses some 30 special children's cinemas to which adults are only admitted if accompanied by children! Films are shown to two age groups—under 11 and 11-17 years; only the best artists and producers are employed in making films on science, travel, adventure and fairy stories. What a wealth of possibilities if only we could have the same set-up! But who knows, perhaps it will come one day as the result of the Committee's recommendation that experimental cinemas be established on similar lines in large centres?

Apart from such long-term possibilities parents would undoubtedly like to see the recommended categories of the Departmental Committee in operation soon. These are as follows:

Category "X" (including the existing "H") from which all children would be unreservedly

excluded; Category "C" which alone might be shown at Children's Cinema Exhibitions; and two advisory categories for all other films to which children would have unrestricted admission, i.e., Advisory "U" for family entertainment, and Advisory "A" preferably for adults.

The other recommendation which I, as a parent, would like to see working in the near future is the one suggesting fuller information and wider publicity for the public regarding the nature and category of films, for this is one of my main difficulties. If parents would like to see these and the other recommendations of the Departmental Committee implemented they should follow the suggestion of the Hon. Mrs. Robert Bowers in last month's *FOCUS* and impress upon their M.P.s and others the urgency of these matters. But even in the un hoped-for event of no action being taken as a result of the Report the grave responsibility of parents in this matter is the same as it always was and they must accept it however difficult it may be.

The Editor has invited a number of persons of widely differing occupations to contribute to this series, which discusses the cinema from a constructive angle.

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FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

TREASURE ISLAND

Starring: Bobby Driscoll, Robert Newton, and Basil Sidney, with Walter Fitzgerald, Denis O'Dea, Finlay Currie and Ralph Truman. An R.K.O.-Walt Disney Production. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 96 minutes.

Chesterton says of Robert Louis Stevenson that "He did for the penny dreadful what Coleridge had done for the penny ballad. He proved that, because it was really human, it could really rise as near to heaven as human nature could take it." He puts into *Treasure Island* all the elements that our parents and teachers and magistrates and psychologists have warned us are bad and dangerous for the young mind and, with a boy at hand as touchstone, produced the immortal adventure story that is the model for all such yarns. What matter if the author has used ideas and characters from other sources, the parrot from Crusoe, the skeleton from Poe, the stockade from Fennimore Cooper? It is the alchemy of Stevenson's art that transmutes these elements into the pure gold of a literature that is entirely his own.

Any film-maker presuming to take these pages for a script has to answer to an ageless jury of youth if they be not treated with respect. Our tolerance permits the excision of certain scenes and one or two characters, but we demand that the *spirit* of the adventure remain intact. That spirit is not satisfied by an actor cleverly disguising one leg, swear he never so blood-curdlingly, nor by a precocious boy pretending he is Jim Hawkins. The spirit of this book requires in the reader and in the audience a willingness to submit to a world of make-believe as to actuality. It demands in the actor the power to speak and to act the lines and situation as if ham were the normal diet of first-class players.

It is satisfactory to report that Walt

Disney has captured the atmosphere of Stevenson's map, and that Robert Newton has the right, slightly theatrical, command of the crafty mind of Silver and of his colleagues to enable the audience to accept the film as a true version of the story. The colour is admirably suited both to the story's intrinsic demands and to Disney's cartoon conception of it. Indeed, at times, one has the impression that the cartoon has come to life.

Newton's Long John is the authentic article. Memories of Wallace Beery in the part are pleasant but Beery's claim to the rôle was based on a reputation for amiable roguery rather than any skill for understanding or interpreting this particular and highly individual rogue. Newton's special brand of eye-rolling, neck-twisting, leering villainy fits Long John like a glove and the oily inflection he imparts to the well-known phrases adds the last touch to the Silver we have always imagined.

Bobby Driscoll, somewhat young for the part, nevertheless succeeds in interpreting the reader's own terrors and exaltations which it is the rôle of Jim Hawkins vicariously to undergo. His American attempts at West of England accent are not successful but it does not matter: the general impression of "sliver-my-timbers" articulated in a variety of vaguely Western voices by the remainder of a British cast is legitimate enough.

Basil Sidney's Smollett, Walter Fitzgerald's Squire, Ralph Truman's George Merry, Denis O'Dea's Doctor Livesey and Finlay Currie as Billy Bones are all broadly-played versions of the familiar characters. John Laurie's Blind Pew lacks the blood-curdling accompaniment of the stick tapping on the road and Geoffrey Wilkinson's Ben Gunn is too shrill for all tastes. Still, these criticisms will not prevent children of all ages and both sexes taking this film to their hearts and thoroughly and uninhibitedly enjoying what is, in fact, a magnificent piece of bravura.

V.



Robert Newton gives
a remarkable perform-
ance of the crafty-
minded Long John
Silver

* *

*

After the last bullet in
the stockade battle has
inflicted severe injury
on Captain Smollett
(Basil Sydney), Dr.
Livesey (Denis O'Dea)
administers medical aid





Long John Silver succeeds in getting the Squire (Walter Fitzgerald) and Jim Hawkins (Bobby Driscoll) where he wants them

*

*

*

There is nothing like a
pipe and a pint to help
the other fellow to see
your point of view



NO SAD SONGS FOR ME

Starring: Margaret Sullavan, Wendell Corey, Viveca Lindfors, with Natalie Wood, John McIntyre, Ann Doran, Richard Quine. **Producer:** Buddy Adler. **Director:** Rudolph Maté. **Distributors:** Columbia. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 88 minutes.

"When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me."

I got as far as that on my own because we had to put it into Latin verse at school. And from information kindly supplied by Fr. Burke I learned that the poem was by Christina Rossetti. Intrigued by the faint aroma of culture given off by the title, I wondered what the film would be about.

I might have known. We are now in the epoch of "only so long to live" films. "Charming, intelligent Mary Scott" (see Synopsis) has only ten months. And charming Margaret Sullavan endeavours heroically, if unsuccessfully, to portray the progress of the lady's cancer.

By those whose only idea of entertainment is what Betty Grable does all this will be dubbed depressing. But this is not a depressing film. Its makers clearly desire to make a contribution to a philosophy of life which can extract the sting from such a situation. And it is to be commended for what might be called, in the terminology of O.C.I.C., its *positive* values. There is an admirable calmness and absence of bitterness. In the absence of any reference to God or the Cross and with only one brief hint of eternity such a subject is obviously at a disadvantage. But the underlying philosophy is not necessarily materialistic; the treatment is as compatible with the outlook of a believer as with that of an unbeliever. This is ingenious, perhaps consciously so.

The picture is also an essay in emotional undertones, unusual in American films. This is a tendency to be encouraged and any other treatment of the theme would have been intolerable. But it has the limitations

of its qualities and there were times when the tragedy of Mrs. Scott left one rather cold.

Q.

THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD

A Walt Disney production in technicolor. Sung and told by Bing Crosby and Basil Rathbone. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 68 minutes.

The title is apt to obscure the fact that this film consists of two stories joined by the slenderest of threads, first the adventures of Toad, from Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows", and then the tale of Ichabod Crane by Washington Irving.

A number of critics have been very pleased with this Mr. Toad and his irrepressible and irresponsible preoccupation with the newest and fastest forms of transport. But there has been a dissenting judgment which suggests that Disney has not quite made the grade. With this I am inclined to agree, largely, I think, because I am irritated by American efforts to be just too, too terribly English (or, in the case of MacBadger, Scottish).

Ichabod has earned little commendation. Visually a period piece, its sound track has been adapted to contemporary taste by the insertion of "close harmony", and boo-boo-boosing. (But those who think that Bing Crosby should stick to golf will be relieved to know that he does not sing much.) Katrina, who is courted by Ichabod, the gaunt schoolmaster, is a sort of sophisticated Snow White. Horrifics are represented by the headless horseman. Personally I can never think of this celebrated apparition without recalling with a chuckle the late lamented Moore Marriott and his leering enthusiasm for the 'eadless' orseman, but young children should be spared a potential nightmare.

The word Ichabod has associations with departed glory. And this is not vintage Disney.

Q.



"Anything you can do I can do better"

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Starring: Betty Hutton, Howard Keel, Louis Calhern, J. Carrol Naish, Edward Arnold and Keenan Wynn. An M.-G.-M. Picture.

Director: George Sidney.

Certificate: U. **Category:** C.

Running time: 107 minutes.

It is becoming increasingly rare to find a film that can be recommended for family audiences. Such films have to have something more than merely harmless morality. They need to be able to bind the family together in common enjoyment so that at the subsequent inquest on the film, each member can relate his own particular enjoyment to the family pool. Such films are not necessarily superior from an artistic or technical point of view, but they must have a quality of fun and pathos which lifts them above the common rut of escapist entertainment. *Annie Get Your Gun* is such a film. It is a technicolored translation into film of the highly successful stage presen-

tation which drew large and delighted audiences to Coliseum. It is not, from the film point of view, an outstanding piece of work; indeed, it seems, from what I am told by devotees of both media, to have missed many opportunities for film expression and to have been content with a more or less straightforward translation to the screen. It emerges as an honest to goodness musical comedy with catchy tunes, pleasing colour and amusing antics from Betty Hutton who bids fair to provide a feminine gender to Danny Kaye.

The characters are historical in the sense that there was a lady sharpshooter called Annie Oakley who travelled with Buffalo Bill and Big Chief Sitting Bull and who did appear before Queen Victoria, much to that eminent lady's astonishment. But one does not go over a film like this with an historical toothcomb. One is content with and grateful for the amusement and pleasure it provides.

KUKSI

Starring: Arthur Sanlay, Suzy Banky, Nicholas Gabor, Ladislav Morvath. A Mafirt-Radvanyi Production. London Films Presentation. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 100 minutes.

This Hungarian film when shown on the Continent bore the title *It Happened in Europe*. It depicts with pathos and, one feels, with terrifying exactitude what happens to the homeless and often nameless children scattered by war as they come together for self protection. They are like animals, yet, as individuals, they come under the influence of natural leaders from among their own number who direct them in the struggle for survival. But the leaders are barely adolescent and are themselves unformed.

In this film we have such a haphazard band of pathetic hooligans wandering over what apparently is Hungary. By masterly cutting we are shown the implications of the human waste arising out of the material waste of war. We have the legs of the goose-stepping Nazis, the wheels of the deportation trains, the feet of the children churning up the dust of the endless roads, trudging along the cracked surface of the parched fields and racing to the shallow, tired streams for water. We see the animal scrambles for what food they can steal from one another and rob from the farms. Naturally they are hunted from the countryside where self protection is the rule for the farmers who do not worry about the children's problems. At last after a hard fight with suspicion of a kindness they cannot understand they are given a sense of community—their own community to begin with before they reach the larger issues. The band has its own tragicomedies and its own tragedies; but we

leave it with a note of hope and possible peace.

At first I was puzzled by some of the undertones of the production. The famous old musician who befriends the children arouses them to a regard for responsible liberty by gradually teaching them the "Marseillaise". I may be a "fascist heart" for saying so, but this great song of liberty has often been the incantation of revolutionaries who have overturned one tyranny and substituted another. Was this almost mystical treatment of such a secular thing as the "Marseillaise" a softening up for the "Internationale"? I wondered. Was Communism being subtly indicated by the restraint on the individualism of these children, leading them away from self into the well-ordered community? But checks on the individual for the good of all are a mark of civilised society and do not pre-suppose the negation or violation of individual rights which Communism imposes. So that was all right.

Then subsequently I discovered that Hungary was fairly free when the film was made in 1945, and that this production was actually chosen for presentation and discussion at a Ciné Forum directed by the famous Père Morlion, O.P., at Bologna, in 1949. At this discussion the central theme of *Kuksi* was formulated as follows: "At every difficult moment, in all times of stress (such as war, misery, injustice), children carry within themselves an inner force which may come to the open and manifest itself, leading them on the right road if this force meets in others a kindness great enough to awaken spiritual energies".

In spite of this judgment from the most respect-worthy quarter, I still have a faint feeling of regret that the kindness displayed is, according to the evidence submitted by the film itself, no more than lofty humanitarianism.

The acting of the principals is noteworthy. The performance of the children is something to see, and wholly admirable. There is no difficulty in following the story as the sub-titling is excellent. You will probably be thrilled by the music which has its own part in conveying emotion—and by the dramatic silences as well.



The nice lady (Jane Wyman) who loves a sailor (Dennis Morgan)

THE LADY TAKES A SAILOR

Starring: Jane Wyman, Dennis Morgan, Tom Tully. **Director:** Michael Curtiz. **Producers:** Warner Brothers. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 103 minutes.

This is a "likely" film, though the story is not so likely. But it is more likely you will like it, this almost farcical romantic comedy. Here Jane Wyman shows she is as adept at comedy as in the heavy stuff. We have not forgotten her moving performance in *Johnny Belinda* and now she moves us to laughs. Of course she is one of the nice girls and therefore loves a sailor (Dennis Morgan), "and you know what sailors are". Or do you? Not this one, as he is a very unconventional one indeed. And as for Tom Tully, who is a bit of a crook and a private tec, and better at opening safes than sardine tins, maybe he steals the film. In fact he does. But you must see for yourself how he does it.

G.

SANDS OF IWO JIMA

Starring: John Wayne, John Agar, Adele Mara, Forrest Tucker. **Producer:** Herbert J. Yates. **Director:** Allan Dwan. A Republic Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 108 minutes.

Let us tread softly here. The film is dedicated to the bravery of the men who captured Tarawa and Iwo Jima, two islands in the South Pacific, from the Japanese. It brings home very effectively the pitiless nature of modern war. There is a note of authenticity which makes it all very real.

But the story into which these events are woven is patchy and hackneyed. Further, the direction is poor and the acting, apart from that of John Wayne, indifferent. But perhaps I am being too critical—I expected a very much higher degree of care with so noble a dedication.

The story concerns a tough sergeant of the Marines (John Wayne) who is hated by the recruits he trains for his ruthless efficiency. But in the course of events they learn to respect him and he in turn becomes demonstrably more human.

T.



London background

Night and the City

Starring: Richard Widmark, Gene Tierney, and Googie Withers, with Hugh Marlowe, Francis L. Sullivan and Herbert Lom. A Twentieth Century-Fox Film. **Director:** Jules Dassin. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 101 minutes.

When Jules Dassin made *The Naked City*, the critics wrote excitedly about the air of actuality which was given to the film by using the streets and bridges of New York as the background for a thriller. The critics are not so vocal about the merits of the technique when the city used is London. Maybe it is because they know London better than they know New York and detect a certain atmosphere of pseudo-

documentary. It is a good thing to use actual scenes where possible; *Bicycle Thieves* demonstrates how effectively this can be done: but there must be integrity if the film is to be real. *Night and the City* is excitingly and interestingly made, but it is fake throughout, from the use of the London scenes as background to the choice of characters that people it and the motives they express.

Richard Widmark is impressive as a spiv always on the edge of working a large scale racket. He runs through London by night in a perfect fever of sightseeing. His last fatal jaunt in flight from his enemies takes him from Soho via the Festival of Britain site near Waterloo to Hammersmith over a bridge that should have led him to the City. Francis L. Sullivan is a nightclub keeper whose premises seem to be situated either in the Criterion or London Pavilion Theatres. The camera has a habit of looking up at him from the ground, which, in view of his bulk, has an odd effect without much significance, for he does not prove to be a very big or frightening person. Herbert Lom is the menacing one. He, we gather, controls all-in wrestling all over London. His father (magnificently played by a gentleman with the sodasiphonic name, Zbyszko) favours the classic Greek wrestling. When Widmark corners classic Greek and Zbyszko dies as result, Herbert Lom's filial devotion puts a thousand pounds on Widmark's head, dead or alive. Then we see what London's underworld really can do. Every news vendor, taxicab driver, pedlar and street musician seems to be in league with Lom to hunt Widmark. A taxi tour stops all round Piccadilly Circus and picks up hints from every corner.

There are ladies in the film, of course. Gene Tierney loves Widmark in spite of himself, but she is left with Hugh Marlowe to console her when Richard is dumped unceremoniously into the Thames. Googie Withers moves majestically through the film as the discontented wife of Mr. Sullivan, and Maureen Delany dresses hideously as an old hag in charge of a boat house at Hammersmith.

If you do not know London and are not worried about things like accents or probability, you may be entertained by this film. It has lots of characters



Rogues agree to differ

who seem to have slipped out of Dickens and lost their way. It seems always on the verge of becoming an important picture, but like Mr. Widmark, it wants to get too much into too little space and time.

V.

CAIRO ROAD

Starring: Eric Portman, Laurence Harvey, Maria Mauban, with Harold Lang, Coco Aslan, Karel Stepanek, John Bailey, Martin Boddey, "Camelia". **Producer:** Aubrey Baring. **Director:** David Macdonald. **Distributors:** Associated British-Pathé. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

The first reviews of this film were quite devastating. But when Sunday came it was gratifying to find that my own more favourable line was confirmed by both the great ladies.

Admittedly there are weaknesses. Eric Portman is supposed to be Colonel Youssef Bey and few people look less like Colonel anybody Bey than Mr. Portman. Harold Lang is supposed to be an international crook masquerading as a common Englishman; the masquerade is so complete that there is no hint of an international personality. (All the same, though I don't remember seeing Mr. Lang before, I very much hope to see him again.)

The picture is a thriller about hashish smuggling, based on actual cases in the files of the Anti-Narcotics Bureau and the unit spent seven weeks in Egypt—and did a good deal of work in the time. I found this documentary approach satisfactory. It is sometimes pleasant to get away from the studios and from the boy-meets-girl formula. And it is pleasant too to have no hesitation in classifying a film as "B" rather than "A". Some alleged attacks on vice are too apt to portray the fascination of vice. Here there is notable restraint; all unpleasantness is kept off-screen. And those who are looking for yashmaks, Oriental dances and the compositions of A. W. Ketèlby must look elsewhere. Though we are "introduced" to "Camelia", the Egyptian artiste, the introduction is not followed up; she gets coshed quite early

on. It is the galloping camel corps which steals the picture.

Q.

FANNY

Starring: Pierre Fresnay, Raimu, Charpin, Orana Demazis and Alida Rouffe. **Producer:** Marcel Pagnol. **Director:** Marc Allegret. **Distributors:** G.C.T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 120 minutes.

The French have the secret of presenting films which, while involving situations and ideas which are contrary to good morality, are, nevertheless, rendered inoffensive to adult audiences by reason of the implicit recognition of Christian standards of conduct. British or American films, using the same situations, ignore the sources of morality and their pictures become, as a result, dangerous. It is the denial of Christian values, the false philosophy, that makes so much modern cinema pernicious.

This film was made in 1932 and is the sequel to *Marius* (reviewed in *Focus*, November 1949) which told of the Marseillais bartender who ran away to sea. Fanny is the girl with whom he leaves an unborn baby and the present film concerns the efforts of her mother to induce her to marry Panisse, a rich sailmaker who, having no children of his own by his first wife, is willing to father the child. The marriage takes place and then Marius returns from sea. His father, however, sends him back again before he can disturb the happy family by his presence.

This outline gives no idea of the richness of observation and dialogue (sometimes extremely salty) or the perfection of acting which the film contains. Raimu, now, alas, dead, established his reputation in this film, as César, the father of Marius. It is a large, warm-hearted, humorous performance and should be seen by all who value first-class acting. The story and the dialogue alike are too sophisticated to be either palatable or understood by those who seek only drugs at the cinema.

Perhaps the Curzon Cinema will put us more in their debt by letting us see the third of this trilogy. V.

WINCHESTER '73

Starring: James Stewart, Shelley Winters, Dan Duryea, Stephen McNally. **Director:** Anthony Mann. **Producer:** Aaron Rosenberg. A Universal - International Picture. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 92 minutes.

It appears that the Winchester '73 rifle was greatly valued in the Wild West of '76. The thing to do if you saw one was to stroke it and then look down the barrel. James Stewart wins a particularly fine specimen in an open shooting competition. He shot so amazingly well with an old rifle that I shouldn't have thought that he needed anything better.

However the prize is promptly stolen from him by a jealous competitor. James spends the rest of the film chasing him. During the chase the rifle passes into the hands of various other bad men, each of whom in turn gets killed. Was there meant to be a moral hidden here somewhere? In the end James catches up with the first scoundrel, who turns out to be his brother, and kills him in a shooting duel. Whether to get the rifle or to avenge the murder of his father is not too clear.

A stupid film, but relieved, in fact made tolerable by some good acting and open-air cavorting. Yes, there's a battle with Indians as well. A problem: in view of the killing pace of those times, how did some of the characters manage to live long enough to develop those fine bushy beards? **T.**

ELLEN

Starring: Robert Young, Betsy Drake, with John Sutton, Henry O'Neill, Florence Bates, Morris Carnovsky. **Producer:** Mort Briskin. **Director:** James V. Kern. **Distributors:** United Artists. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 90 minutes.

Good old paranoia! When you don't know what else to make a film about there is always that. And when a man loses all the things he loves, one after

another, fiancée, horse, dog, statue, picture, rosetree, house—well, somebody is obviously paranoiac. But who? That is the problem. After a while I began to suspect everybody in the film of being bats. But in the end the perpetrator is discovered. Having admitted his guilt, he fires a revolver at one girl because he imagines she is another. After that I thought he would be put away in a nice home for paranoiacs. Not at all. He and everybody else live happily ever after because this has "served as a catharsis which purged him of his mental twists". What's that? You don't believe it? Then you had better get a psycho to see to your psyche. **Q.**

THREE HUSBANDS

Starring: Emlyn Williams, Eve Arden, Howard de Silva. **Producer:** I. G. Goldsmith. **Director:** Irving Reis. **Distributors:** United Artists. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 80 minutes.

As a satire on the American way of life this is a really successful film, showing that the Americans can laugh at themselves with less conceit than the English. The performances by the various players are adequate, although the parts themselves are not very exacting. Though a satire, it was not written by Oscar Wilde. The outstanding performance is that of Eve Arden, as the former popcorn-selling wife of a self-made man. She combines the stridency presumably necessary to the selling of popcorn with the *chic* peculiar to American women, and really seems to be the only player to overdo her part just that little bit that the piece demands.

It is regrettable that the story begins in Hollywood's usual screen Heaven, consisting of rolling clouds and solemn voices. From here Maxwell Bard (Emlyn Williams) looks down on his friends who get themselves more and more embroiled in the tangle resulting from letters he left when he died. It is all cleared up when the will is read, after the three couples concerned have learned their respective lessons. But it could all have been done without the heaven. Although one can tell funny stories about heaven, it seems in bad taste on the screen. **U.**

MY DAUGHTER JOY

Starring: Edward G. Robinson, Peggy Cummins, and Richard Greene, with Nora Swinburne, Walter Rilla, Finlay Currie, James Robertson Justice, Ronald Adam, and David Hutcheson. **Producer and Director:** Gregory Ratoff. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

As I left the Press Show of this film I had an interesting chat with the manager of the cinema. Like many of his kind he had a low opinion of the public taste in films. Also like many of his kind he had little idea that any responsibility for the deplorably low level in films rests with those who exhibit them. He asked whether the Church had much influence on the cinema. I suggested that the influence of the Church was not to be measured so much by the number of films which are condemned as by the growing sense of discrimination now noticeable among those who hitherto would have been content to pay to see rubbish rather than to see nothing.

This introduction is not intended to indicate that *My Daughter Joy* is not worth paying to see. On the contrary, though it has superficial glamour and looks, at first sight, like the mixture as before, it has certain qualities which make it both entertaining and worth considering. It tells the old tale of the man who grows rich and thinks that his riches give him the right to rule the world. The discovery that his daughter on whom he dotes and in whom he hopes to perpetuate his ideas is not, in fact, his daughter at all, overturns his mind and he ends in splendid isolation, still dreaming that he rules the world.

Edward G. Robinson repeats his well-known performance as the tough man, this time with certain overtones of refinement. His cool, detached certitude of success is admirably suggested. Peggy Cummins gives just the right amount of over-acting necessary to outline the character of the pampered capricious daughter. Nora Swinburne, Finlay Currie and James Robertson Justice contribute satisfactory performances to a film that is, in spite of its gloss, not without thought-provoking moments. V.

RUY BLAS

Starring: Jean Marais, and Danielle Darrieux, with Gabrielle Dorziat, and Marcel Herrand. **Director:** Jean Cocteau. **Distributors:** Films De France. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 104 minutes.

Victor Hugo is doubtless more trustworthy as an historian than Dumas, though it is known that he was not above quoting "authorities" who were as much creations of his imagination as were his characters. Ruy Blas appears to have been an historical personage but I have been unable to verify the details of the story as presented in this film.

It tells of the intrigues of a displaced police chief to involve the Queen of Spain in a scandal by foisting an unknown poet on the court as a grandee. The poet eventually becomes Prime Minister as well as the Queen's lover and all ends in murder and suicide.

The film is beautiful to look at but has little else to recommend it, even as a collector's piece. Cocteau's technique grows more and more bewildering.

An atmosphere of irreverence and mockery pervades the film and it is not easy to see why it has a "U" certificate from the Censor. Two scenes of questionable taste in church involve first a disguised police officer and his quarry indulging in the antics of father confessor and penitent in a confessional box, and secondly, Jean Marais performing a Douglas Fairbanks escapade on the chandeliers in the church while the terrified congregation run shrieking around the building. These episodes have no compensatory balance in story development and seem to be merely relics of Hugo's anti-clericalism.

Jean Marais' acting in a double rôle is tedious. Danielle Darrieux is cool and charming but the acting honours go to Gabrielle Dorziat as the Lady-in-Waiting. This grand actress always adds distinction to any film she plays in no matter how inferior it may in fact be. What a pity such players cannot play a greater part in the choice of the rôles they perform.

V.

BITTER SPRINGS

Starring: Tommy Trinder and Chips Rafferty, with Gordon Jackson and Jean Blue. **Producer:** Michael Balcon. **Director:** Ralph Smart. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 100 minutes approx.

This is the third film which Ealing Studios have made in Australia. The first, *The Overlanders*, was an outstanding technical and artistic success in the factual-fictional style. The second, *Eureka Stockade*, a dismal failure on all counts. With *Bitter Springs*, we are back again to the integrity of purpose and skill in technical achievement which distinguished the first effort in the Antipodes.

To a cameraman's first desideratum, glorious scenery and a marvellous light is added a sound job of scripting (W. P. Lipscombe and M. Danischewsky) and economical and firm cutting—perhaps almost a little too abrupt on occasions (Bernard Gribble). The story has the great merit of simplicity in outline and basic probability. A sheepfarmer's eldest son leaves the family homestead along the Australian coastal belt, round about 1900, in order to find new sheep-country inland. The troubles of dealing with the shortage of water and the unwillingness of the Aborigines to welcome white interlopers near to their precious water holes provide the dramatic theme round which the action is built.

The ethical and political problems touched on in this film are very topical. Not only the special problems of the colour question but the wider question of human tolerance. The skirmishing between the whites and the blacks; the fear and misunderstanding leading to unnecessary bloodshed on both sides have a very up-to-date ring about them. In the end the sheepfarmer is brought to realise that "Fighting don't get you nowhere", and he agrees to try to bring the blacks into his scheme as co-operators on a soil that is fruitful enough for all.

The acting is most satisfactory, allowing for and even because of a certain gaucherie on the part of the Australians which may arise from unfamiliarity with film work but strongly suggests actuality in a sphere they are

accustomed to. The Aborigines in many cases steal the picture. Little Nick Yardley (you will remember him as the youngest boy in *Bush Christmas*) scores heavily. There is one enchanting episode in which he has a game with a baby kangaroo that is strongly reminiscent of the best Disney. Another scene in which he is the solitary white among a crowd of little black boys testing their skill as marksmen with spears is also pleasing. Chips Rafferty, after his debacle in *Eureka Stockade* is back again doing what he knows how and is most impressive as the sheepfarmer. Tommy Trinder manages to look quite in place with his Cockney sales-talk to a horde of menacing and non-understanding blacks. He gives evidence too of an ability to deal with serious situations that might be exploited more. Jean Blue is very convincing and has great dignity as the sheepfarmer's wife and Nonnie Piper is pleasing if not very important as the daughter. Gordon Jackson repeats his performance as the typical "God-fearing Scot, wanting no truck wi' women". He should avoid being typed too strongly.

This film demonstrates again the potentialities for technically fine films which Australia offers. There is no shortage of interesting subjects. I suggest, for a start, the perusal of Archbishop Ullathorne's biography—"From Cabin Boy to Archbishop". It is full of film material.

Recommended.

V.

TONY DRAWS A HORSE

Starring: Cecil Parker, Anne Crawford, Derek Bond, Barbara Murray, with Mervyn Johns, Edward Rigby. **Producer:** Brock Williams. **Director:** John Paddy Carstairs. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

Once we have survived the heavy humour of the impropriety in the kind of horse that young Tony drew on the surgery wall, we witness this thoroughly English farce racing along to a well-deserved win.

The doctor father (Cecil Parker) is outraged by the precocity of his child. The psychiatrist mother will not have

her son straight-jacketed by convention and insists on his right to self-expression. A first-class row, apparently the culminating one of many, follows, and with regrettable threats to seek divorce, she returns to mother (Barbara Everest) and arrives amid all the feminine turmoil over the preparations for her sister's wedding. The following morning, in order to clear her mind and enjoy fresh air she goes for a drive with her future brother-in-law (Derek Bond), lands up fifty miles away at Newhaven and forces him to accompany her on a day trip to Dieppe. There they become caught up in an exuberant French wedding party which does the round of bars and bistros—very funny sequences these with Derek Bond being a very nice young Englishman being very English. They will gradually wake up to reality and the mess they've got themselves into. But meanwhile her father, seeking relief from wifely rule, has become amusingly "tight" in company with a foreign lecturer, also "tight", who is due to address a street corner audience on behalf of a queer temperance society called "The Waterbrights" and lands up in a police station. And in the meanwhile the deserted husband has to cope with Tony who has been expelled from school on account of his drawings there. He comes to "The Battlements", the home of the "in-laws" in search of his by now Diepped wife to discuss this latest enormity with her but primarily to find out what has become of her and this by now suspect Tim (Bond). The trippers have tried to telephone from Dieppe about what has happened, but everything remains very suspicious. In the end with the help of a chartered plane and French officials they are brought back. The wedding, after some last minute anxieties due to young Tony, comes off at last. Clare (Anne Crawford) will not allow her husband to spank Tony but only because, blessed thought, she is looking forward to doing so herself.

There are many good lines, so many that the laughs rather crowd and one misses some. Cecil Parker, irreproachably Harley Street, is amusingly serious, for in farce there has to be someone who is the dignified victim of circumstance. Miss Crawford plays an uproarious part which she never allows to get out of hand to the point

of stridency, though whether psychiatrists should be quite so irresponsibly feminine is another matter. I hope that is a compliment for so it is meant. I liked the sweeping idiocy of the masterful mother, including her consoling advice when told of her grandson Tony's expulsion from school: "There are plenty of good schools. I've heard of one called The London School of Economics." Mervyn Johns I liked too as her rebelling husband. There is a gem of a performance by Edward Rigby as the caustic grandfather at "The Battlements". I've already said something about the nice young man of Derek Bond. Finally, I always feel sorry for the heroine's sister in these plays. To be a heroine's sister is like being a Bishop's secretary or the better sort of curate, all of them jobs calling for self-effacement. So if Barbara Murray is colourless as the precarious bride it must be because she was meant so to be. Farce must have its victims.

X.

16mm. Advisory Service

We have for some time been thinking out ways and means of assisting the large number of 16mm. enthusiasts who, we feel, form the backbone of the Catholic Film Institute. As our readers must know by this time, we aim ultimately to produce a body of film technicians who, though amateur in status, will be professional in standard and will have a vocational approach to the whole question of the use of film by Catholics.

As a further step in this direction we hope shortly to devote a section of Focus to the needs of the sub-standard enthusiasts. In the meantime we have secured the services of a panel of sub-standard experts who have agreed to answer the technical queries of any of our readers who may care to take advantage of their services. If you have a problem connected with 16mm. projector or camera work, send it along to Sub-standard Service, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7. Questions will be answered in a subsequent issue of Focus.

THE VATICAN

A Seven-League and Phoenix Film Production. **Directors:** Guiliano Tomei and Hans Nieter. **Distributors:** Columbia Pictures. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 45 minutes approx.

There have been many films dealing with the Vatican and St. Peter's made this Holy Year but none, I think, either so excellent in technical achievement or so beautiful in conception as the subject of this review. Hans Nieter, a producer-director, well known for his series of travel films, *The World Window* series in technicolor, is a technician with an unusually acute sense of his responsibility as a maker of films. Not only does he consider that they should be as imaginatively beautiful as possible, but also that they should contribute in some measure to the well-being of mankind.

It was on this basic notion of the well-being of mankind that he set about making his film on the Vatican. He is a convinced Lutheran but he also recognises the power for good that is symbolised in the person of the Pope. He feels that the Vatican enshrines the only really effective resistance to the destructive forces of Communism which are threatening spiritual and material civilisation alike. His film, therefore, attempts to assess the civilising and spiritual achievements of the Catholic Church as seen in the Vatican: the work of the Secretariat of the Vatican, its administrative tasks, the artistic and cultural storehouse of its museums, the diversity in unity of the different rites and liturgies that are practised under its aegis; the inspiration that radiates from the person of the Holy Father himself.

The commentary was written by Hans Nieter and is beautifully delivered by a group of first-class speakers, thus obviating the monotony so often experienced in films with a lengthy commentary even when the speakers have attractive voices. It must be admitted that the Protestant Hans Nieter has permitted himself an exuberance of praise and appreciation of the subject of his film which would be impossible for Catholics to utter or even hear without some little embarrassment. It is perhaps

all the more valuable that it should be so. There is just one inaccuracy in describing the rite of Low Mass which is, of course, quite excusable in one who is not a Catholic. For my part, I could wish that there had been a little more insistence on the fact that the Holy Father represents Christ and that that is the true reason for the devotion that is paid him. It is, happily, also true that the present Pope is a man of God in his own right also and in that capacity has a tremendous influence on those who come in contact with him.

About the photography and colour, no praise is too high. It is one of the most thrilling films from that point of view that I have seen for many a long day. Columbia Pictures are to distribute the film and it will be available in 35mm. and 16mm. I suggest a campaign for its showing in public cinemas to be started by all interested readers of *Focus*.

J. A. V. B.

STROMBOLI

Starring: Ingrid Bergmann, with Mario Vitale, Renzo Cesana, and Mario Sponza. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio Pictures. **Producer and Director:** Roberto Rossellini. **Certificate:** A. **American Legion of Decency rating:** Morally Unobjectionable for Adults. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

For reasons best known to themselves the distributors of this film did not show it to the Press. The crazy mechanical system which sends films round the circuits regardless of public taste or desire makes it difficult for me to see this film without chasing it all over London. Other film engagements make this impossible. I cannot, therefore, give you a personal estimate of the film. Suffice it to say that the American Legion of Decency have rated it as "Morally unobjectionable for Adults". Some Americans with whom I was speaking recently in Rome assured me that the film is a technical and artistic flop. I do not think you need worry unduly if you miss it. Probably the only reason people want to see it is on account of the sensational

and unwholesome publicity which the antics of its star and director achieved in the national press. One thing should be made clear. The Vatican has not banned it, so this piece of inaccurate publicity need not worry you. The appropriate authority dealing with films in Italy is our opposite number, the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, and they have not, as far as I know, seen the film. Whatever the moral or artistic merits of a film, it is, surely, highly distasteful that publicity such as has recently been used to boost this film should be tolerated by decent folk.

J. A. V. B.

MY FRIEND IRMA

This is a harmless story about two girl room mates, one of whom is very anxious to marry a millionaire. Irma, the other room mate, is a feather-brain who does a thousand stupid things that are anything but likely to realise this happy consummation. After some singing and dancing, near suicide and drunkenness, there is a happy ending for the two girls. The film is so silly that no one is likely to be affected for better or worse, but you never can tell.

J. C.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 6 and 7)

<i>Adieu Leonard</i>	(B) (211)
<i>Ambush</i>	(B) (181)
<i>And Baby Makes Three</i>	(A) (211)
<i>Ballad of Berlin, The</i>	(B) (182)
<i>Big Lift, The</i>	(A) (206)
<i>Capture, The</i>	(B) (182)
<i>Champagne For Caesar</i>	(C) (181)
<i>Chance of a Lifetime</i>	(B) (172)
<i>Dance Hall</i>	(B) (211)
<i>Deported</i>	(A) (206)
<i>Dividing Line, The</i>	(A) (183)
<i>Eagle and the Hawk, The</i>	(B) (207)
<i>East Side, West Side</i>	(A) (182)
<i>Father is a Bachelor</i>	(B) (206)
<i>Father of the Bride</i>	(C) (213)
<i>Guilt Is My Shadow</i>	(B) (180)
<i>Holy Year</i>	(C) (178)
<i>In a Lonely Place</i>	(A) (204)
<i>In the Name of the Law</i>	(A) (212)
<i>Jour de Fête</i>	(C) (181)

<i>Key to the City</i>	(A) (207)
<i>Last Holiday</i>	(B) (179)
<i>Louisa</i>	(C) (212)
<i>Mrs. Mike</i>	(B) (205)
<i>No Man of Her Own</i>	(A) (180)
<i>Odette</i>	(A) (203)
<i>On the Town</i>	(175)
<i>One Way Street</i>	(A) (172)
<i>Out of the Darkness</i>	(C) (115)
<i>Outpost in Morocco</i>	(B) (147)
<i>Prelude to Fame</i>	(B) (174)
<i>Reluctant Widow, The</i>	(B) (179)
<i>Retour A La Vie</i>	(A) (173)
<i>So Long at the Fair</i>	(B) (205)
<i>South of St. Louis</i>	(175)
<i>Stage Fright</i>	(A) (208)
<i>State Secret</i>	(177)
<i>Stratton Story, The</i>	(B) (183)
<i>Wabash Avenue</i>	(A) (206)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Happiest Days of your Life, The</i>	(A) (108)
<i>Passport to Pimlico</i>	(C) (150)
<i>Red Danube, The</i>	(A) (112)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B) (80)
<i>The Search</i>	(B) (342)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
<i>Whiskey Galore</i>	(B) (220)

O.C.I.C. General Council PENTECOST

Meeting, Rome 1950

Other pens will have given an account of the Congress-Pilgrimage which the International Catholic Film Office organised in Rome at Pentecost. It is for me to give a short résumé of the business side of the meeting. Owing to the fact that Holy Year demanded our presence in Rome, our discussions were somewhat telescoped in order to leave time for the pilgrimage exercises and the other events of the Congress.

Representatives of 23 nations having Catholic Film Centres gave the needful international aspect to the gathering. For the first time we were able to rejoice in a full complement of vice-presidents at the Executive meetings, for both the U.S.A. and Latin America were moved by the fact of the Holy Year to make the big effort needed to send their vice-presidents to meet the European delegates. Father P. J. Masterson, Executive Secretary of the American National Legion of Decency, and Professor F. Soneira, of Uruguay, were given a particularly warm welcome.

No new member countries had asked for admission to O.C.I.C. this year but at the next General Council it is hoped that Australia will apply for formal admission. Canada also, which has hitherto been unable to participate fully in the deliberations of O.C.I.C. owing to problems of organisation will be ready to ask for normal membership.

It was announced that the next General Council meeting of the International Catholic Film Office will take place in Lucerne, opening on Friday, May 25th. The theme of the discussions will be the part played by the film critic in educating the public. It is hoped that a distinguished representation of film critics from various countries will find time and opportunity to attend the General Council Meeting in order to contribute their experience and views to the common cause.

The Appeal to the Industry which was formulated at the General Council in London last year and promulgated by the Executive Committee in February this year has had very gratifying results. Members of the Industry in most

countries this side of the Iron Curtain have expressed their agreement with its suggestions.

The Enquiry which was made among Catholic members of the industry asking for information and suggestions as to the best methods of assuring a wide distribution to films of Catholic interest, has likewise had a satisfactory result though it is hoped that those countries which were unable last year to find an opportunity to make the enquiry will do so as soon as possible in order to complete the researches which O.C.I.C. has undertaken in this connection.

The progress of the *International Review* was reported upon. This has been most disappointing as regards the English edition and it was decided that unless there is speedy evidence that the *Review* can show signs of increasing circulation in English-speaking countries the English edition will have to be discontinued. The two main causes for the lack of support for this *Review* which the Holy Father has spoken of as indispensable to the formation of a Christian philosophy of the film, are (1) the Board of Trade regulation which prohibits the importation in bulk into this country of periodicals printed in hard currency areas. Consequently copies have to be sent into the country against individual subscriptions and people are apparently unwilling to subscribe unless they see the *Review* in bulk. In this connection it was decided also that specimen copies could be sent to anyone making a request for them. (2) The difficulty of finding an agent in the U.S.A. to handle the distribution of the *Review*. It was hoped that America might provide the major share of the sales of the English edition.

The Venice Film Festival. O.C.I.C. were once again invited to send a jury to the Film Festival at Venice during August and September, and to award a prize to "the film contributing most to the spiritual and moral betterment of mankind". O.C.I.C. were also invited to organise a Conference to study Children and the Cinema to take place at Venice immediately prior to the

Festival. Father Leo Lunders, O.P., was nominated to organise this conference.

The O.C.I.C. Jury was formed as follows: Dr. Charles Reinert (Switzerland), President; Rev. J. A. V. Burke (Great Britain); Father Leo Lunders, O.P. (Belgium); Signor D. Fabri (Italy); Senorita Etchegoyen (Uruguay); Mr. Rasmussen (Denmark), and a French film critic will also join the O.C.I.C. Jury if they are at liberty.

Reference was made to the *International Catholic Union of the Cinema*, an organisation which gained some publicity in the Catholic press of the world and had caused some confusion of mind among those who are aware of the work of O.C.I.C. This group was formed somewhat hastily in Rome by a number of technicians who wished to improvise an international union of Catholic cinema technicians. After representation from both O.C.I.C. and the Italian Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, the promoters very willingly agreed to work in accord with O.C.I.C.

It was announced that Dr. Ruskowski, General Secretary for External Relations of O.C.I.C., has been invited by the American Army of Occupation in Germany to make a lecture tour during the autumn to talk on the question of the Catholic position with regard to film activity.

The increasing importance of television was commented upon and the demand that is frequently made among Catholics that O.C.I.C. should concern itself with this work. Dr. Bernard, the President, pointed out that the international organisation devoted to radio, namely U.N.D.A., was the group mainly concerned, but urged all members of O.C.I.C. to make whatever efforts possible eventually to bring about an international meeting of persons interested in television.

The events of the Congress Pilgrimage have been commented upon elsewhere, but it may complete this account to mention briefly the addresses given at the opening and closing of the Congress. Signor Andreotti, Minister of State in the Italian Cabinet, spoke at the opening session of the Congress. He made a special plea for a constructive approach to the problems presented by the cinema. Necessary as moral classification is, he said, it is only one aspect of the

important work of Catholic film action.

The closing session of the Congress was marked by a number of speeches in various languages by technicians and actors who testified to the spiritual values of the cinema. Messages were read from Eric Johnson, of the Motion Picture Association, from Walt Disney, from Irene Dunne and Sam Goldwyn.

Walt Disney declared that the fight for the better film must be carried on with the intensity of a crusade. Irene Dunne, who had made her pilgrimage to Rome the week before the Congress opened, regretted her absence owing to studio demands in England but sent a long document affirming her conviction that the motion picture industry, with its obvious potentialities for good has, in fact, recognised the need to develop the spiritual values implicit in the medium. Many workers in the industry are anxious to be worthy of the responsibility and duty falling them. "I have always striven to guard its power to present good, clean entertainment," she said, "and in my difficulties I have always found that my Faith played the greatest part."

Cyril Cusack, the well-known Irish actor, added to the Pentecostal note of the Congress by opening his remarks in Gaelic, saying that he was proud to be an Irish actor and placed his work at the service of the Catholic Church. Speaking in English, he said that it was the most important duty of the Catholic to see that his work was truly informed with the Catholic spirit. It was a fallacy to suppose that the film actor is completely subservient to the director. There are times when it becomes his duty not to do as he is told; that is when what he is told to do conflicts with his conscience as a Catholic. Then there are two courses open to him. He can refuse to play the part and so lose his job, or he can discuss the matter with the director from the moral point of view. The director will usually see that it is better to adjust the script to suit good morality, for what is immoral is also often imperfect artistically. When what is shown in the film is evil posing as good, there is no alternative but for the actor to protest. Mr. Cusack gave several examples illustrating the kind of action he had mentioned. He concluded by saying that the Catholic has the duty of taking positive action against immorality.

J. A. V. B.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Cri du Coeur

Our staff is, as usual, overwhelmed with the demands on its time and ability. It is in the nature of things that Catholic organisations working for the betterment of man should do so against the grain. It is no less true in the case of the organisation concerned with that most hydra-headed power, the cinema. As well as the indifference of those who think that there is nothing to be done with the cinema save to ignore it, there is the more exasperating attitude of those who think that we have cornered a nice little monopoly in cheap entertainment. It may be as well to state quite categorically that there are no perks of a financial or other nature for those who have found themselves called on to implement the demands of the Papal Encyclical on Films. It is because we are convinced that the film is a power for good that must not be neglected and because we are also convinced of its ultimate artistic and religious potentialities that we continue the heart-breaking and head-aching task of trying to "promote good motion pictures" in all the varying aspects that these words of the Pope suggest.

Our sole financial support is the generosity of our members, the circulation of *Focus: A Film Review*, and the proceeds of the hire of the films in our gradually growing film library.

Our most valuable asset is the moral support and kindness of a host of friends, both clerical and lay. Without that we should simply cease to be.

Regional Societies

We are glad to announce that Swanage Catholics have organised their own

Catholic Film Society. It was founded last winter and has had four film sessions during which *Monsieur Vincent*, *Visitation* and *Don Bosco* were shown. The Hon. Secretary and Treasurer is Mr. P. H. Day, of Fairholm, Northbrook Road, Swanage. Our warm welcome to this enterprising group. May others speedily follow suit.

In this connection, may we be allowed to point out that there is not a sufficient number of purely Catholic films available in this country to enable such societies to continue if they insist on showing only "religious" films. There are a large number of other commercial films of a satisfactory nature which it would be well worth any such society's time to show. After all, it is presumed that one of the objects of such a society is to advance the appreciation of film. This cannot be done without a study of the best films from all sources. Anything we can do to help in this connection we shall be glad to do.

Lectures

Father Burke had the privilege of lecturing to the students of the Venerable English College while in Rome on the recent Catholic Film Congress. His subject was Catholic Film Action and the part to be played in it by the clergy. He had a very attentive and well-informed audience and the interest shown augurs well for the future of this important department of Catholic Action in England.

Lectures have also been given to the C.P.E.A. at Ipswich and to the Catholic pupils at Harrow School.

FOCUS INDEX

A complete index of *FOCUS: A Film Review*, Vols. I and II, is now available. Copies may be obtained from the Manager, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7, on receipt of stamps to the value of 1½d.

Cover Personality

SIOBHAN
McKENNA

On May 24th, 1923, there was born to the McKenna family in St. James's Park, Falls Road, Belfast, a daughter who was christened Siobhan. Her father was a Lecturer in Mathematics in the Technical School; her mother had been a buyer for Millinery; both hailed from Cork; neither of them had any relatives on the stage. And even when the older red-haired Ann won a number of medals for elocution and recitation, the art of acting was never thought of, or mentioned, in the house. All Siobhan McKenna wanted to think of was her speciality at school, at the age of five, the making of raffia handbags for her mother (who still treasures one); in after-school hours her chief pleasures were swinging off lamp posts, making mud pies, following the Orange men on parade wildly excited by the wild excitement of their drums, and visiting all possible wakes in the neighbourhood! Then came the memorable day for her first Holy Communion, and Siobhan McKenna went with her bouquet of flowers and a candle to the altar, in a frock specially cut down for the occasion, from the Confirmation dress of the elocutionist and reciter of the family, the red-haired Ann.

Today Ann McKenna is a dentist, and her sister Siobhan is the distinguished actress of the stage and films.

The years between have the secret. In 1928 the family moved to Galway, a town that Siobhan says she loves best of all. Her father had been appointed to the Chair of Mathematical Physics. He is an ardent lover of the Irish language, so he quickly secured for his two children a native speaking Nanny. The two girls grew up as fluent Irish speakers.

In Galway there is an Irish theatre called the Taibhdhearc; it is this theatre which really became the cradle of Siobhan McKenna's genius. She never missed a play there: she never went to the cinema. Small wonder, as she herself told me, that seeing plays is still her chief delight; a film must be a very good one before she goes to see it. The Taibhdhearc is still her favourite theatre, and the Abbey a good second.

When Siobhan was fourteen years she

went to St. Louis' Convent in Monaghan, where she spent three years. From the first term, to her great surprise, she was put in charge of play production, but she did not neglect her studies, and thanks to the wonderfully specialised teaching, where the arts were by no means neglected, Siobhan won an entrance scholarship to the University. She rejoined her parents in Galway in 1939. In her first year at the University she did science and arts. She suspected her father wished her to be like himself a mathematician, but in her second year she dropped science. He accepted her decision stoically when she pointed out that her interests lay in literature.

While studying at the University, Siobhan, the inveterate playgoer, crossed the footlights at the Taibhdhearc to act in translations, by Professor Liam O'Briain, of masterpieces by Shakespeare, O'Casey and Molière. Today, Miss McKenna pays high tribute to Dr. O'Briain, her greatest guide. At lectures he would put on records of Bernhardt in scenes from *Phèdre*, and the young actress felt a great desire to play *Phèdre* some day. Then came the part of Lady Macbeth, and the seventeen year old just took it in her stride. Today Siobhan McKenna laughs at the idea; but it was all so serious then. She was being brought hopelessly, helplessly, almost unknown to herself, into being a part of the theatre itself. As Siobhan herself expresses it, acting had taken hold of her. Before the University student knew it, Walter Macken was asking her to take up acting as her profession, and Walter Macken was then producer-actor-manager of the Taibhdhearc. Siobhan shook her head. A second temptation came from Liam O'Briain: the lead in an adaptation of a play by Jean Jacques Bernard—and at the Abbey in Dublin. Which was it to be? A play at the Abbey would mean a B.A. with second-class honours rather than first which was what Siobhan wanted as much as anything in the world after three years' studying. The struggle ended in a win for the University. Siobhan studied and stewed over her books for three months of the 1943 summer. With first-class honours in her

bag she arrived in Dublin in the autumn. determined to forget the stage and secure a travelling scholarship to France.

But then something happened. An invitation arrived one day asking her to an audition at the Abbey theatre. The result of that audition is history. Siobhan McKenna returned from her audition and wrote to her father that she was forsaking studies for the stage. And Dr. McKenna knew Siobhan had crossed the Rubicon.

At the Abbey she acted with such renowned actors as the late F. J. McCormick, Cyril Cusack, M. J. Dolan, Denis O'Dea (who later became her husband), and Eileen Crowe. These are only a few of the names of the people who helped her, besides the producer, Frank Dermody, who still remains her favourite producer. Her first Abbey part was that of a French maid, a comic rôle in a translation of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Her first English part was that of Monica, a tragic rôle in Joseph Tomelty's *The End House*. There followed parts in Irish and English plays, in comic and tragic rôles, in plays written by Paul Vincent Carroll, Yeats, Tomelty, Molloy and O'Casey.

In 1947, after four years at the Abbey, Siobhan McKenna crossed over to

London for her first film *Hungry Hill*, in which she took a small part. Then back to Dublin she came to marry Denis O'Dea. After the honeymoon she went to London again to act with Maureen Delaney and Liam Redmond in Paul Vincent Carroll's *The White Steed*. It was about this time that Lance Comfort was looking for a girl to play the lead in *Daughter of Darkness*. He went along to see her in Carroll's play, and came around to ask her to take the lead in his film. The shooting of the film took from April to September, due mainly to Cornwall weather. It was a long time. But it launched Siobhan McKenna right into the front row of the screen's greatest dramatic actresses. The critics and the public acclaimed her unanimously.

When Siobhan returned to Dublin she acted in *Ferdinand and the Dragon* at the Abbey and followed it with *Mary Rose*. Then in 1949, Mila Parelli was dropped from an almost completed film *The Lost People*, and Siobhan McKenna was sent for. She completed the six months' work in that film in ten days: a histrionic tour de force that sealed her place in filmdom.

More plays followed: *Berkley Square* at the Q, with Douglas Montgomery;

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Kindly send donation to:

Rev. J. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	233	17	6	Mrs. T. McDermott	...	1	1 0
F. G. Fitzpatrick	...	1	0				
Miss E. O. Searle	...	1	0 0				
					£235	19	6

Fading Mansions at the Duchess with Michael Gough, Liam Gaffney and George Relf, and a five week run of *Countess Cathleen* in a hoped-for one week run at the Abbey.

This summer Siobhan McKenna worked on a new film, *South African Story*, with Dennis Price and Jack Hawkins. It will be her fifth film. Sometime she hopes to play a journalist in a film—preferably a theatre critic, and Siobhan says she

would play it sympathetically, because she once wanted to be—a journalist! But her ambitions are still all tied up with the stage. The records of the divine Sarah that Siobhan McKenna cherished in college were not cherished in vain: that same University graduate is now being spoken of as the future Irish Bernhardt with a conviction that holds little doubt.

SEAN O'RAHILLY MAHONY.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Films and Delinquency

Sir,

May I trespass further on your columns to make it clear in what way I differed from my colleagues as regards films being a cause of delinquency? Through telescoping their conclusion when introducing me to to your readers, I fear a wrong impression of my rejection must have been given.

Juvenile delinquency existed, of course, long before the cinema was invented, as well as the "deeper, subtler and more various influences" which my colleagues rightly say "are at work". Lack of religion and parental control, bad housing, low mentality are some examples. The problem before the Committee was not to what extent this complex of other influences caused delinquency, but quite simply, whether and to what extent the cinema contributed. This is where we parted company.

My colleagues stated that as a result of various statistical enquiries and opinions, "The results do not in our judgment fasten on the cinema any primary share of responsibility for delinquency or moral laxity . . ." They would go no further than suggest in their final sentence, "That Society however, cannot overlook the likelihood that the cinema is a factor in this complex of moral and social forces

. . . ." Based on a psychological conclusion, going deeper, as *The Times* put it than "court-room evidence", I stated that "the conclusion is inescapable that it is an 'important contributory cause' when too many bad films are seen". In this, I was taking the strong warning given by my colleagues and myself to parents and the cinema industry, upon the effects of fright on what we summed up as "well-attested evidence".

Ex-approved schoolboy whom I have already mentioned wholly attributes his juvenile past "to gangster films and the like" after first blaming his parents bunting him off to the cinema too often. "And how I should know," he says from his own bitter experiences and desires as a result to help. "When I see kids lapping up films they should never see, how I feel for them. I can see myself all over again very often. And responsible people say films can have no effect. *What dangerous and absolutely false talk.*"

I would be very glad to hear from any FOCUS readers who consider I am wrong in stating that the cinema contributes to juvenile delinquency when too many bad and unsuitable films are seen which must condition the mind as well as suggest ways and means of action.

Yours truly,

HENRIETTA BOWER.

BOOK REVIEWS

Plan for a Christian Factory. By Alan Turner, 2/-. Spa Lane Mills, Derby.

This modest little book is an introduction to the important social experiment initiated by Léon Harmel at Val-des-Bois in France. This good Catholic industrialist played no small part in the preparation, by example and precept, of the social encyclicals of Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII, and his factory system is now a model for all industrialists—Catholic and non-Catholic—who wish to try to put into practice the principles of social justice as they apply to factory working conditions.

Though this booklet has little reference to the cinema, it cannot but be of the greatest interest to most of our readers and particularly members of the Catholic Film Institute who are aware of the important part that films can play in promoting social justice. Mr. Alan Turner will surely be well known to our readers for his devoted efforts to use the film for precisely this purpose. His films *Family Affair*, *The Sacrifice We Offer* and *Peace Work*—the latter particularly concerned with the Harmel system at Val-des-Bois—must have done untold good to large audiences hitherto ignorant of the manner in which daily work and Christian charity can be integrated into a way of life that must be the normal road to sanctity for the vast majority of layfolk.

J. A. V. B.

MOVIE PARADE

A Pictorial Survey of the World Cinema. Studio Publications, 30/-.

The older generation of filmgoers will find this book absorbingly interesting. First published in 1936, it has now been brought up-to-date and contains nearly seven hundred photographs from the world's best films, starting with the first fictional picture—*The Great Train Robbery* (1903)—and ending at the 1948-1949 period.

The authors of this book, Rotha and Manvell, are deeply interested in film-

making—the former, of course, being well-known as a producer of documentaries, the latter as a writer about the cinema—but they have no illusions about their subject. Here are some extracts from a frankly-written introduction:

"The fiction film is a great medium subjected by its costliness to the lower forms of exploitation for easy profit. Only rarely can the artist break through unscathed by considerations of wide appeal to his comparatively illiterate audiences. . . . Too often purely meretricious personalities are exploited by publicity into stardom. . . . In Britain over 25,000,000 cinema seats are sold a week, and yet a quarter of the population never sees a film. This quarter contains only too many people whose patronage could do a great deal to raise the standard of films, which at present, in America and Britain especially, are designed primarily for adolescents."

That the last sentence is true of British films, anyway, is demonstrated by the small number of stills representing them in the Sociological and High Comedy sections of this book. These two contain the more adult examples of movie-making, yet out of sixty photographs from outstanding films in the Sociological section there are only four from British pictures concerned with this theme, and I cannot think of any omissions on the part of the compilers.

About the statement concerning "easy profit" I am not so sure, for in 1949 the majority of British productions—despite their preoccupation with the adolescent—failed to recoup their costs, let alone make any profit. On this showing, it may well pay our producers to woo that part of the population who, unless the latest Carol Reed picture is showing in the neighbourhood, are conspicuous by their absence.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book—price 30s. and well worth it—both to those with early memories of the cinema and those who are too young to have ever seen a silent film.

LYN LOCKWOOD.

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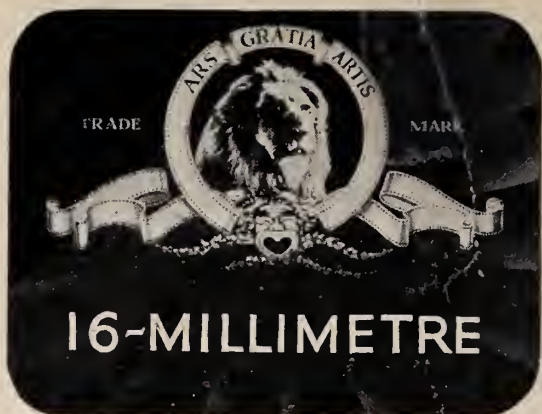
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2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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Salute to the Antipodes

As these lines are being written, the Catholic Film Institute Summer School is in progress at Ramsgate. A full account of the proceedings will appear in a later issue of this Review. For the moment we are moved to reflect on the peculiar implications revealed by a consideration of the territorial origins of our students.

May we say at once that we have seldom been privileged to meet a more delightful group of people than those who have honoured us with their company this week. We are happy to meet persons who have hitherto mostly been names at the end of letters and to know that they and the other students who have come to our School are so devoted to the idea and ideals of Catholic Film Action.

The peculiarity we refer to is that though there are students from Manchester, Liverpool, Dundee, Derry, Cornwall, Barrow-in-Furness, only two come from the London area, and one of these is a Polish refugee from Warsaw! We have also a young man from New Zealand, via Paris, whose presence gave us the greatest pleasure and gratification. About him, more later.

On previous occasions, too, we have noticed that the larger proportion of our audiences have come from distant parts of the country. Does that mean that Londoners do not appreciate film appreciation? Or do not need it? Or merely that prophets have no honour in their own part of the country! Be the reason what it may, we are exercised in mind about the fact and would be glad to have the views of our friends as to the cause of this apparent boycott of the C.F.I. by Catholic London.

To return to New Zealand: our young friend from the Antipodes represented, though he knew it not, an astonishingly large and enthusiastic proportion of the Catholics of

Australia and New Zealand, who are aware of the importance of the Catholic attitude to the cinema and are working very hard to further it.

There are, we are told, some 1,000,000 Catholics in Australia and some 200,000 in New Zealand. Not a very large number but, in proportion to the total population of these countries, a larger slice of the population than is the case in England. Nevertheless, the amount of intelligent enthusiasm shown towards the aims and objects of Catholic Film Action is out of all proportion when compared with similar enthusiasm in this country. We do not pretend to know the reason for this; we are only grateful that such encouragement comes to us from our friends on the other side of the world.

It is, perhaps, invidious to mention names when so many are praiseworthy, but we feel sure that we shall be excused if we pay particular tribute to the efforts of Mr. J. C. Reid, M.A., who is President of the New Zealand Film Institute and the author of "Catholics and the Films", a remarkable little brochure which outlines the constructive approach to the cinema which Mr. Reid, in company with so many other students of the film, regards as the traditionally Catholic and necessary one. Then, too, tribute must surely be paid to Miss Elizabeth Cape, President of the Catholic Film Centre, Sydney, Australia. To her and to her associates we owe a special debt of gratitude. At all times and in all manner of ways, they have shown their appreciation of the efforts which we in London are making to implement the late Holy Father's demand that Catholics aware of the significance of the cinema should do all they can to "promote good motion pictures". They have been loyal and consistent supporters of

(Continued on page 261)

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 8—CHILDREN'S FILMS

Students of film need never be at a loss for a debate whilst there are any children and cinemas in the world, but I hope they will try to go one better than some of the probing experts who regard young people as laboratory specimens.

For a variety of reasons which need not concern us here, film has a way of turning the most simple questions into complex problems. For instance, whether films exert a good or bad influence over young minds, and what kind of subjects are the most popular with children, are questions which have engaged committees for many long months on intensive investigation, rather as if children were a new invention. I suggest, therefore, it might be wise to start with a clear desk, and a perfectly open and detached mind. Think, for a moment, of toy shops and children's books. Recall, too, children's plays and pantomimes, and their special radio hours. Since parents first learnt to shape wood, they have been making toys for their children, and for centuries they have invented little tales and fables for them, whilst those with creative ability have produced children's stories and plays which bring delight to each new generation. Now the charming simplicity of stories written for the young is not a quality to be discovered by a research committee.

I cannot imagine that the author of *Peter Pan* began by grading and card-indexing children into groups, and recording their reactions to this or that situation.

Today, however, the child is dissected; its grins are measured; its tears are put under the microscope. It is photographed by infra-red rays in the dark whilst it watches films, registering horror at horrible scenes, and laughter at funny scenes, which gives committees a lot more work, of course. If only the kiddies would register horror at the funny scenes, and laugh

at the horrible ones, the experts would get into a terrible tangle.

The student would do well to remember that children rarely find their way into theatres presenting adult plays, and that there is a world of difference between books and plays for adults and those for children—but *there is little if any difference between films for adults, and films for children*, judging by the thousands of youngsters who visit cinemas. Why? First, because the cinema does not cater for a very high standard of intelligence. Secondly, because it is too accessible. For years, parents have been taking children to cinemas, but not for the sake of the children. The experts admit this state of affairs is undesirable, but consider that the grading of films is the best solution; that most U films are suitable for children, and that if parents take their offspring to see A subjects, they are to blame.

I was one of the people within the industry who gave evidence before the Committee investigating this subject, and I expressed the opinion that children should be barred entirely from all commercial cinemas, because films made for adults cannot be suitable for children.

Film has won the day, however, for the experts have come to the conclusion that the cinema is *not* responsible for juvenile delinquency, lack of discipline, savagery, and so on; instead, lack of parental control, poor living conditions and the war are blamed. I entirely disagree. The latter reasons are contributory factors, of course, but the cinema is *the* greatest influence on children (and adults, too), and it is *not* a good influence.

To help to counteract this, the special children's film shows on Saturdays were launched in recent years, programmes consisting of selected films from the industry, and a small, but increasing number of features and shorts especially produced for children,

which unfortunately are not going to be made in future because they do not pay. Consequently, programmes will be made up of any available films regarded as suitable for children, but not made for them in the first instance. There has never at any time been any suggestion of stopping the publication of children's books and periodicals, or the production of children's plays. Only films—because they are too costly to make and show in cinemas. Because the industry is not sub-divided to cater for maximum commercial production and distribution, and limited specialised production and distribution, on different levels. There are a great many talented writers, artists and craftsmen who devote themselves to creating books and plays for children, and I suggest their aid should be enlisted for making children's films on 16mm. (not on standard size film), at minimum costs,

to be shown, not in cinemas, but in halls everywhere.

All praise is due to the great pioneering plan for children's special shows in large cinemas on Saturday mornings, but it was handicapped from the start by being an integral part of the commercial industry.

Hence my suggestion for a simpler approach, in ordinary halls where sub-standard films may be shown.

The non-theatrical (16mm.) network which has been built up, not only in this country but throughout the world, for showing governmental and specialised films, exemplifies what can be done in this field, apart from cinemas, and how people in all areas, remote and otherwise, are reached. What has been achieved for the enlightenment of adults can be done for children, thus offering them a substitute to the commercial cinema.

SALUTE TO THE ANTIPODES

—Continued

Focus and the *International Film Review*, and though we look forward to the day when they will be able to produce a Review which will reflect an entirely Australasian Catholic film consciousness, we are grateful that, until that time, they are prepared to take a lot of trouble to support the efforts which we are struggling to continue in this country.

Another name that must be mentioned is that of R. Richardson, of Wellington, New Zealand, who has initiated a film importing organisation and who writes the most friendly and constructive letters to us and is a constant encouragement. Father F. M. Chamberlin, of Victoria, is another enthusiastic friend whose efforts we value very highly. There is Frank Murphy, of the *Melbourne Advocate*, whose writings encourage and cheer us with the knowledge that, no matter what the difficulties and snags we may be encountering in the country of our origin, our purpose is understood and seconded by many supporters Down Under.

We have mentioned the possibility that Australia may produce its own Catholic Film Review. As members of the *Office Catholique International du Cinema*, we were very glad to learn

during the recent General Council Meeting of this Office in Rome, that it is likely that Australia will apply for full membership of O.C.I.C. next year. Only an accident prevented us having a delegate to represent Australia at the Cinema Congress, and the President and General Secretariat of O.C.I.C. were very gratified to know of the enthusiasm of the Catholics of this great Dominion in the cause of Catholic Film Action. We in England shall welcome warmly this strengthening of the English-speaking voice on the Council of the International Catholic Film Office, which, in view of the size and importance of the British Film Industry, is so necessary and useful.

The international approach to the problems of the cinema represented by the publication of the *International Film Review* is particularly urgent in these days of growing intolerance of Catholic culture. It is all the more to be regretted, therefore, that inadequate support of the English edition of the *I.F.R.* may bring about its disappearance. May we hope that in this field, too, our friends in New Zealand and Australia will prove to be the far-seeing supporters of Catholic Film Action who will save this very valuable organ of intelligent Catholic thought.

To all our friends in the Antipodes, on the part of the Catholic Film Institute in London, a warm, "God bless you" and "Thank you"!

A Classic of Cinema History

By Hilary Carpenter, O.P.

There is a very ancient musical axiom with a paradoxical flavour which is still current in liturgical chant books: *Pulchritudo cantus in pausis consistit*—The beauty of singing lies in the pauses. This is the musical rendering of the basic principle of all art, and it could be applied to visual art in this form: *The beauty of the picture lies in what you don't see*. This negation covers both what is excluded by the frame and what is included within it. A frame, whether it be the edges of a canvas or the limits of a cinema screen, is the delimitation of an area of light, which area becomes a picture when it is partially and intelligently occluded by shadows of greater or less intensity; only thus can the necessary contrasts be produced to make light significant in the pictorial sense. It is true to say, therefore, that visual art is the ability to control shadows, and this is pre-eminently true of cinematographic art.

It is elementary to observe that there can be no actual exercise of art without craft. Every artist must be a craftsman, or at least have the mental ability to control the necessary craftsmen. For this reason, the history of the *Magic Shadows* of the cinema screen is of prime importance to all who would take an intelligent interest in the art of the cinema. By the same token, the recent volume by Martin Quigley, Jr. will undoubtedly rank as a classic of cinema pre-history, more especially as the author has the rare gift of combining the fruits of scientific research with a very readable style of presentation, and shows great aptitude of choice in pictorial illustration—none of which is perhaps surprising in the

gifted Editor of the *Motion Picture Herald*.

It has been the aim of men since the dawn of history to reproduce mechanically the functions of the human eye in order indefinitely to extend in space and time the power of the eye itself—and especially the power of the eye to see things in motion. The first real step forward in this direction and the basic essential element in its present day perfection was the discovery and making of a lens; and it is historically certain that lenses for magnification were in use in Babylon 700 years before Christ. *ABSIT OMEN*.

From this point on Mr. Quigley traces the history of the lens through Aristotle, Archimedes, Euclid, Ptolemy, Alhazen, to the "magic" of the Franciscan friar, Roger Bacon—a magic that was none the less effective and scientific for being "all done with mirrors". (He might also have seen the germ of the "talkies" in the Dominican St. Albert the Great's talking automaton which so startled St. Thomas Aquinas.) From then on the development of the "magic shadows" was significantly ecclesiastical; the Church was unwittingly in process of Christianising Babylon—and the process is by no means complete! It was the priest Leone Alberti who developed the *camera lucida* and also the vastly more important *camera obscura* (the immediate forerunner of the camera) which was perfected considerably by his disciple, the famous Leonardo da Vinci. It was, however, a layman, the Neapolitan Giovanni Battista da Porta, who was the first commercial showman of the magic shadows—"a boy wonder who would have felt at home in modern Hollywood," says Martin Quigley.

Considerable advance in the making and use of lenses was made by a

1 "Magic Shadows—The Story of the Origin of Motion Pictures." By Martin Quigley, Jr. (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1948; \$3.50.)

German priest, Johannes Kepler, and a Jesuit colleague, Christopher Schiemer. But the principle of projection was discovered by the real father (or, at any rate, grandfather) of the cinema, a German priest named Kircher, who put on a "premiere" for high ecclesiastics in Rome just over three centuries ago to demonstrate his "magic lantern".

The search for movement in pictures was given great impetus by two French priests, Abbé Nollet and Abbé Guyot, while their discoveries were commercialised, often unscrupulously, by laymen. Nevertheless, it was two laymen, Plateau, a Belgian scientist, and Roget, author of the famous *Thesaurus*, who first put motion into pictures. The former, indeed, was amongst the martyrs of science, for he sacrificed his own eyesight that future generations might see pictures in motion. It remained for an Austrian, Baron General Franz von Uchatius, to combine the Kircher projector with the Plateau principles of motion in pictures, and the cinema was born. Mr. Quigley's lucid description of the apparatus and its use in all these developments makes absorbing reading.

From Austria the ball passes again to France and also to England with the epoch-making discovery of photography by Daguerre and Talbot, but immediately afterwards the United States entered the field with the system of printing photographs on glass slides perfected by the Langenheim brothers of Philadelphia. Backwards and forwards between the Old World and the New passed the ball of development in motion pictures, until Marcy of France and Edison and Eastman of the United States, the theorist and the practitioners, combined to produce the prototype of all film movie projectors. From that time it

was merely a question of overcoming practical difficulties and perfecting apparatus. Mr. Quigley follows the efforts of the pioneers in various countries with fascinating assiduity until Edison perfects his *Vitascope* in 1895, and the magic shadows at last reach the cinema screen.

"And thus the motion picture, like many another achievement of the human heart and hand and mind, has come down to us as the result of incalculable effort on the part of many . . . It is the creation of men of many centuries and many nations and from these diversities of time and persons it has gained its amazing power, its universal appeal."²

We have given only the most sketchy precis of this learned and fascinating book, but perhaps enough to indicate both its interest and its importance. Notwithstanding the technical perfection attained in the apparatus, the cinema has not yet justified the devotion and labours of its pioneers through the centuries. Their aim was, as we have said, to reproduce the functions of the human eye and to extend their scope in an almost unlimited degree. But in the perfecting of this production one thing tends to be forgotten; the human eye is the organ of the human intelligence. It looks out upon a world of reality and is made to see the goodness and truth that lie in beauty. That is what is to such a large extent lacking in the modern cinema; but it is something that the cinema is capable of, and worthy of; and Martin Quigley's book is peculiarly valuable in illuminating the mind to a better appreciation of both the capability and the worth of these magic shadows.

2 "Magic Shadows"; p. 161.

FOCUS INDEX

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No. 2—*A Positive Approach to the Cinema*

THE TEACHER AND THE CINEMA

By Margaret Anderson

Responsibility and Education

More than half the children of school age in Great Britain go to the cinema at least once a week. In the previous article in this series, it was pointed out that the ultimate responsibility for any ill-effects which may result rests on the parents who allow this to happen; there is also, however, a duty regarding the cinema which falls more and more upon the teacher *in loco parentis*. This is an age which realises that children are more than minds to be instructed in the three R's and that education embraces the spiritual, mental and physical health of the child as well as his intellectual achievement. The care of the whole child has brought new duties to the teacher; his work is to prepare that child to become a full member of the community and to live his life as completely as possible. Of that life, for the majority of people, the cinema is one of the most constant factors.

As an aid to teaching in the classroom, the film is extremely valuable; its power outside has to be appreciated. The Russians early recognised the importance of film as a medium for propaganda. The use of both sight and hearing means that there is less strain on each sense, and conscious effort is reduced. This easy assimilation can produce a passive state of mind where thought is unnecessary, and one in which the subject is readily influenced. Children with their unformed minds and greater susceptibilities are even more easily impressed. Two years ago a light engine and a goods train were derailed by boys who had seen a train derailment "on the pictures". Young children are not able to distinguish between truth and fiction on the screen; it is all real to them and becomes part of the phantasy world in which they live. What they see is too often violent or horrifying.

Physical Effect on Children

In the Report of the Departmental Committee on Children and the Cinema, there is a complaint of the lack of direct evidence of the ill-effects of frequent visits to the cinema; but teachers know of the lethargy and inattention that is always apparent in cinema habitués, particularly those who go during the evening and then come to school with dull eyes. I know of intelligent children who have become slow because their mental and physical energy has been sapped by late nights and over-stimulation of their emotions at the cinema. Physically, the Saturday Club is an obvious improvement, but unfortunately so much of the material presented is unsuitable and defeats to some degree the purpose of what is taught in school. False standards are shown which temper the mind of a child over a long period and condition it to false values, as the Hon. Mrs. Bower points out in her Memorandum to the Report. If parents are not going to apply sanctions (and to many it is a convenience that children are out of the way, no matter what they are seeing) then it is for teachers to tackle the trouble.

What the Teacher Needs to do

The misuse of the cinema is all the more deplorable because of its potentiality for good. In an ideal State the Children's Cinemas would be run on a non-commercial basis by voluntary local committees, showing films specially made for the purpose, providing all that children enjoy and what they might be encouraged to enjoy. We can hope, at least, for legislation whereby *all* films to which children are admitted, whether accompanied or not, would have to be passed by a panel of parents and teachers. Difficulties in procuring this can be overcome if there

is sufficient agitation and support for the proposed Central Committee, and if Members of Parliament are canvassed. The best weapons are facts, and it is for teachers to carry out research on a large scale. They know their pupils, they understand growing minds, and they have a wide understanding of childhood; their initiative and co-operation is essential if real evidence is to be collected and used.

Apart from obtaining statistics and psychological data, good work can be done by the class teacher holding informal discussions of the local films of the week. Junior children especially are completely frank about their likes and dislikes and will readily discuss their reactions to what they have seen at the cinema. Film clubs where children are able to see versions of suitable *entertaining* films are already a feature in some schools, and they provide a basis for comparison with those shown at the local "pictures". The teacher should be able to recommend particularly good general releases about which he has read in reliable reviews. A critical attitude will gradually develop if children know that what they have seen will be discussed in class or in a film group. It will help the younger ones to realise that the cinema world is unreal; they will gain a more objective approach.

Cine Clubs and Courses

For older pupils in all types of secondary schools, apart from the showing of 16mm. versions of good films, more can be done to stimulate interest in the technical side of film-making; talks by cameramen, make-up experts, electricians, dress designers, "extras", an occasional director or producer, could do a great deal towards making children critical in the full sense of the word, teaching them to select that which is worthwhile, and to discard that which is not. Some schools have even made successful films of their own. In my local borough, a group of secondary modern girls and boys wrote two scripts and filmed them, using their school as a set and the other pupils as extras. It was interesting to notice that the theme of both was of right triumphing over wrong. Seniors might also investigate cinema-going habits as part of their social studies. Emphasis all the time needs

to be on changing the passive attitude to the film to one which is active and creative.

In the past, the antipathy of some teachers to the attendance of children at the cinema has tended to make it a vaguely illicit pleasure; bringing it into school will de-glamorise it, and a more balanced sense of proportion may result, but before they can deal with the question adequately teachers must themselves be instructed. They should take advantage of courses and lectures on film-making and appreciation such as the summer school being held at Bangor this year, and should read good critical and informative publications of which *Focus* and the *International Film Review* are suitable examples.

The Place of Film Appreciation

In the training of future teachers the colleges have a great opportunity to give a lead in the serious study of the cinema. No training college would fail to give courses in Art, Music or Literature; no training college can afford to neglect the cinema. Pioneer work has been done by the Sacred Heart nuns in their two colleges at Roehampton and Fenham where a scheme has been worked out in order to make an intelligent approach to the film. Critical appreciation is trained by means of a knowledge of technique, history and aesthetics generally. The students have seen and discussed various types of films, have considered their social implications and have done practical work in the form of visits to Children's Cinema Clubs and observations upon them. At one of the colleges a child audience was asked to write an "appreciation" and much was learnt from their efforts; the other college has been visited by Fr. Burke who discussed the ethical aspect of some recent films, and there the "Critic and Film" series of the British Film Institute has been used. The principal of the northern college writes:

"I happened to overhear a conversation between two girls one afternoon which ran like this:

'Been anywhere?'

'The flicks. Rotten show.'

'Oh, hard luck. We enjoyed it hugely; we knew how to criticise.'

After that (continued the principal) I knew something had to be given to every set of students."

That nun is a member of an enclosed order.

The good work must spread to all training colleges and training departments so that all future teachers will be able to deal with the cinema in relation to life.

This will take a long time, however, and the problem is urgent. Teachers already in the schools must get to work and plan a campaign. The first thing to do is to go to the Stationery Office or to the Public Library and read a copy of the Report. Then act.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Cinema 1950. Edited by Roger Manvell. A Pelican Book, 2s. 6d.

This is the first volume of what is intended to be an annual survey of the cinema, replacing the former Penguin Film Review. Like its predecessor, it is extremely interesting and very good value for the money. There are twelve articles ranging from Robert Flaherty's reminiscences of his film-making to an entertaining satire on film critics by Peter Ustinov.

A particularly useful essay is that by Leonard England in which he challenges the popularly-accepted idea that cinema-goers are, on the whole, an unintelligent lot. If not flattering, the conclusions Mr. England arrives at are at least less devastating than many a sociologist would have us believe.

An inset of 122 well-chosen stills make this modest volume a fascinating book of reference.

J. A. V. B.

Film. By Roger Manvell. A Pelican Book, 1950, 2s. 6d.

Roger Manvell's volume, here given a new edition and very much enlarged, has become a veritable classic of film appreciation. It contains so much that film enthusiasts ought to know about the most popular of the arts, that, at the price, there is no other volume to replace it as a text-book for study groups.

Every aspect of the cinema is touched on including, of course, the vexed question of censorship. In this connection, I feel that we have a legitimate moan to make that Dr.

Manvell ignores the constructive work of the *Office Catholique International du Cinema*. Like all other commentators, he mentions the American Legion of Decency and its negative but necessary classification of films. He does not allow to other national film centres the credit they undoubtedly deserve for their important constructive work in the field of film. May we hope that in a subsequent edition of *Film*, this omission will be remedied?

J. A. V. B.

Moir Shearer. By Pigeon Crowle. Faber & Faber Ltd., 21s.

Admirers of Moira Shearer will find much to interest them in this beautifully illustrated book with its 47 photographs of the star in various rôles. It is a story of years of hard work during which each new opportunity was grasped and made the most of and which were finally crowned with well-earned success. Like every true artist, Moira Shearer is her own sternest critic and is far from satisfied with her own attainments. It is, perhaps, characteristic that in 1948, at the time when public acclamation of her performance in *The Red Shoes* was at its height, she should say in a broadcast: "I think more than anything else in the world I would like to be able some day to dance Giselle really well. To be in fact a great ballerina—some day". The book ends with the departure of the young ballerina for America with the Sadlers Wells company, with "the years of endeavour, of achievement and fulfilment" behind her and every prospect of a still more brilliant future ahead.

M. M.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

THE WOODEN HORSE

Starring: Leo Genn, with David Tomlinson, Anthony Steel.

Producer: Ian Dalrymple.

Director: Jack Lee. **Distributors:**

British Lion. **Certificate:** U.

Category: B. **Running time:** 101 minutes.

The Wooden Horse was one answer to the prisoner's perpetual problem: How can I escape? But it was inspired by an incident thousands of years ago. The Greeks got into Troy by concealing soldiers in a wooden horse. Peter (Leo Genn) and John (Anthony Steel) decide to get out of Stalag Luft III by a similar method. The German guards are not suspicious when a vaulting-horse is constructed out of Red Cross boxes, because they know that the English are mad; and what could be madder than that underfed airmen should wish to spend hours day after day vaulting it? They do not guess that the two men are concealed in the horse each time it is carried out and back, that a tunnel is being bored to freedom, that the entrance shaft is carefully covered over with boards and soil.

This ingenious device enables the tunnel to be started fairly near the wire fence. The suspense is appalling. The field-glasses of the German guards are continually focused on the horse and there are a thousand chances of a slip leading to detection. The sand has to be disposed of: it is carried away in little bags made out of trouser-legs. There is the awful moment when the sand is discovered . . . and another when Peter is buried by a sudden subsidence . . . and all the time the vaulters are getting weaker and almost have to give up . . .

The whole thing is fantastic and would be quite incredible—except that it actually happened. The film, which is an adaptation by Eric Williams from his own novel, is so convincing that it

has something of the quality of a documentary. It gains enormously from the extreme simplicity and expert handling of the story. The acting is superb. Leo Genn and Anthony Steel as Peter and John, and David Tomlinson as Phil, who takes charge of the vaulting and is allowed to escape with the others, can hardly be overpraised. I defy you to see this film through and not be almost maddened by the tension.

It is arguable that it might have been better to have ended the story with the actual escape from the camp and not to have gone on to Lübeck, Denmark, and finally Sweden. But in that case we should have missed the admirable performance of Lis Lowert as André, the French worker who arranges for the fugitives to meet Sigmund, their Danish rescuer. It may be felt too that the occasional touches of camp humour are rather banal, but surely that is as true as the rest.

Forgive me for moralising, but the picture has, for me anyhow, a very topical message. At the present moment the world situation seems grimly hopeless and we think of the horrors of atomic warfare and ask when rather than whether. Well, here is a true account of the victory of human ingenuity over an apparently baffling problem. Here is the triumph of human courage in the face of apparently overwhelming odds. It cost a good deal: physical endurance and psychological strain over a long period. It needed the unselfish co-operation of all the prisoners. But it succeeded.

If you like a thoroughly good film, *The Wooden Horse* is one that you simply must see. And I need hardly add, you must see it through from the beginning. But if you are an ex-P.O.W. and don't want to be reminded of your experiences, you had better stay away. It is all far too realistic!

J. R. W. D.

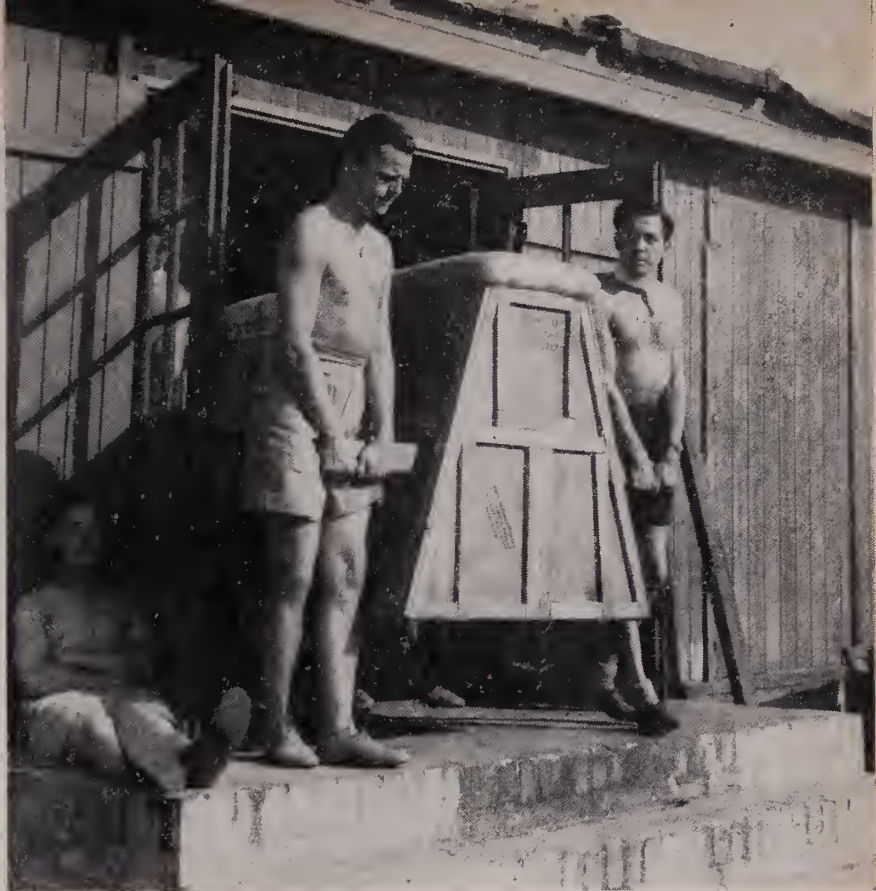


(1)

(1) John and Peter (Anthony Steel and Leo Genn) discuss plans for escape

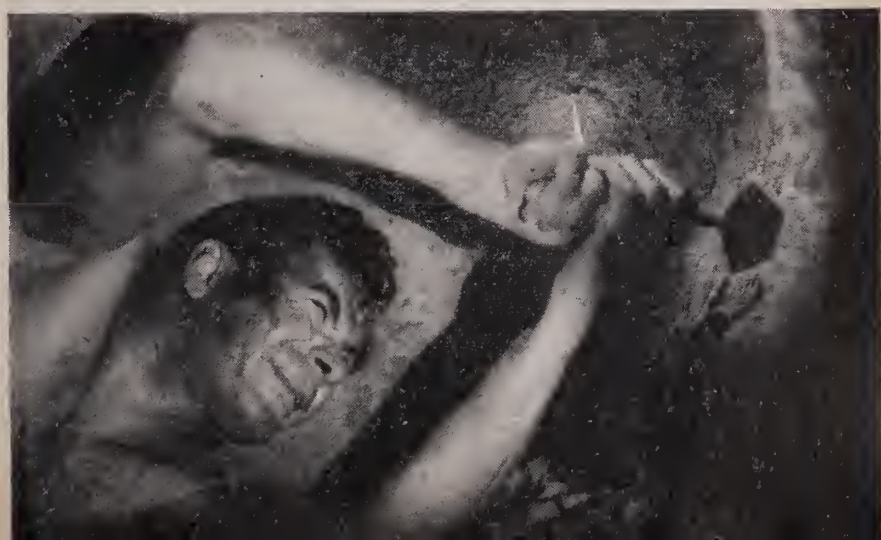
(2) The Wooden Horse is carried out (David Tomlinson and Leo Genn)

(3) At work in the tunnel (Leo Genn)



(2)

(3)



HAVE I LIVED BEFORE?

(Ballongen)

Starring: Nils Poppe. **Producers:** Svensk Filmindustri. **Director:** Nils Poppe. *Category:* A.

This Swedish film, shown privately to the critics, is a disappointing, dull, vulgar essay on the theme of incarnation. It is composed of six episodes in which Nils Poppe is the central character and ranges from a Viking scene to a circus piece. They are of uneven quality and are enlivened only by the whimsical and Chaplinesque clowning of Poppe. He is worthy of better material. Perhaps he will allow someone else to direct his next film.

The entirely materialistic conception of the Creator and the Hereafter is, perhaps, to be expected from the decayed Protestantism of Scandinavia.

V.

SYLVIA AND THE GHOST

(Sylvie et le Fantome)

Starring: Jacques Tati, Louis Salom, Odette Joyeux, Pierre Larquey, François Perier, Jean Desailly, Claude Marcy. **Director:** Claude Autant-Lara. **Producer:** Ecran Francais and André Panlevé. Distributed by Film Traders, Ltd. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 93 minutes.

This fantastic French film tells of a girl of sixteen who has a romantic preoccupation with the long dead subject of a portrait, Alan de Francigny (Tati), who had been in love with her grandmother. To soften the blow of the sale of the picture her father, the Baron (Pierre Larquey), calls upon theatrical agents to supply him with a ghost who will convince the young lady that the spirit of Alan has not departed with his portrait.

A young admirer and a young house-breaker are assumed also to come from the agency and the ghost potential is tripled. But this is too easy. There is the genuine ghost to be reckoned with as well. A ball in Sylvia's honour is wrecked one way and another between the lot.

The tender, ridiculous father, the rather coarsely aristocratic mother (Claude Marcy), that absurd tragedian

and ghost specialist from the Paris stage (Louis Salom), the tough robber (François Perier), the honest undeclared suitor (Jean Desailly), and of course the genuine, non-speaking ghost as well as the comic manservant—all revolve round the solemn little Miss who, fortunately, is cured of her romanticism at the end.

It is the French mixture of mockery and tenderness. The English titling is well done, but the standard of elocution is so good that no real difficulties are presented to those of us who travel light with no more than our schoolboy French.

X.

SUNSET BOULEVARD

Starring: William Holden, Gloria Swanson, Eric von Stroheim. **Producer:** Charles Brackett. **Director:** Billy Wilder. A Paramount Picture. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 110 minutes.

The surprising thing about this film is that the writers have provided such an interesting story on rather a trite subject and that it has been put on the screen very convincingly by the producer. It deals with the penultimate act in the drama of one of the great stars of silent days, Norma Desmond, played excellently by Gloria Swanson, who, having been thrown on the rubbish heap with the coming of the talkies, dreams herself mad preparing for the great come-back. Living in luxury on Sunset Boulevard, she writes a script of her life, so long and impossible that when she learns that nothing will come of it, she is driven to murder.

Gloria Swanson has been in the business long enough to have proved her talent, and certainly the stars who can survive their own decade and play on into another and then another, few as they are, do shine out with a brilliance exceeding the popular favourites of a particular day. The other parts are quite adequately played, and it suits the piece that they should be dominated by the star who has stood the test of time. This film has one of the best produced endings I have seen for a long time, and it is as well perhaps that the last act of the drama is left to our imagination.

U.



Ralph Hingston (Ronald Howard) and his young wife Clare (Margaret Johnston) enjoy a picnic by the river

PORTRAIT OF CLARE

Starring: Margaret Johnston, Robin Bailey, Richard Todd. **Producer:** Leslie Landau. **Director:** Lance Comfort. Presented by Associated British Pictures. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 100 minutes.

This is a typical film of a novel, in this case one by Francis Brett Young. It is also typical of the novelist, though none the worse for that. He is well known as a specialist in these family affairs, with a little twist that makes the story. As a result of its origin there are too many characters, who all get in each other's way. They have nothing to say in the film, though in the book they would have some more or less important place. There are twenty-nine characters listed in the cast, but it is difficult to remember more than a dozen of them.

But apart from such criticisms, it must be admitted that this is a very competent film based on the principle that it is wrong to marry except for love. Whatever the morality of such a principle may be, one can admit that marriage will seldom be successful with-

out love, especially in these days of great personal freedom. It will perform a useful function if it makes those young people who see it careful before they rush into wedlock.

Margaret Johnston plays her part with customary distinction. As Clare she has married very young and has been widowed within six months as a result of a fishing accident. She broods over her loss, and suffers much, being the daughter of the landed gentry, because of bad relations with her in-laws, who are *nouveau-riche*. Eventually she marries again for the sake of her son, and finds only unhappiness because she does not love her husband. Robin Bailey as the husband, the lawyer Dudley Wilburn, plays an ungraceful part very well. He parts from his wife at last, and she has to wait an unspecified time until she is free to marry Wilburn's cousin, Robert Hart (Richard Todd), with whom she has fallen in love. In her old age Clare can pass on the value of her experience to her grand-daughter.

This should be a popular film, especially among those who like to see some good interior photography.

U.



Richard Widmark and Barbara Bel Geddes

PANIC IN THE STREETS

Starring: Richard Widmark, Paul Douglas, Barbara del Geddes.
Director: Elia Kazan. **Producer:** Sol C. Siegel. A 20th Century-Fox Production. **Certificate:** A.
Category: B. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

Our interest in a film will depend on the measure in which we can identify ourselves with the characters and events depicted. "How about interest which is aroused by scenery, music or intellectual considerations?" you may say if you are in a combative mood, as I hope you are. From that searching criticism I take refuge in the philosophic concept that in knowing something, that thing becomes in some sense part of us, and that therefore scenery, music and so on can only be appreciated in so far as we can interpret them in terms of ourselves, or if you like in terms of our experience. This

is exemplified by the boredom of children with adult plays. They can understand action but not the subtleties of life that come with maturer experience. It explains why it is easier to be enthralled with drama among English people than with the emotional upheavals of Eskimos; why, too, a modern setting has an easier appeal than a medieval or ancient one.

These approaches to the mind are easier, but not necessarily better. It is good for us by a process of comparison and judgment to understand conditions outside our particular experience. Films should not be considered simply as a method of turning Sunday's tough meat into a highly spiced but twice dead rissole for Monday's dinner. If the cinema is to survive as an art, it should seek the substance and not be content with the shadow. To consider it merely as a form of escapism is to sign its death warrant.

By these standards this excellent thriller must be considered shallow. It is very well done, but could have been so very much better. It has such a theme as could have raised it to the immortals, but in the desire for excitement it misses life and thus its own immortality.

But at least it illustrates how attention is grasped. With a certain detachment we see a murder in the slums of New Orleans. With awakening interest we learn that the victim was suffering from a dread and virulent disease. With real concern we realise that there is an absence of clues as to the identity of the murderers and that they are probably carriers of a fatal germ that will cause wholesale



Richard Widmark and Paul Douglas

contagion in a matter of hours. It is here that I think the film sidesteps real life. The medical officer, a man of dynamic personality, played by Richard Widmark, persuades the authorities to adopt an unlikely procedure, and then in a highly individualistic way tracks down the murderers. The film ends with a typical hunt of the murderers along the water front.

I recommend the film. It is well worth seeing.

T.

WATERFRONT

Starring: Robert Newton, Kathleen Harrison and Susan Shaw.

Producer: Paul Soskin. **Director:**

Michael Anderson. *Certificate:*

A. Category: A. Running time: 80 minutes.

This film is at best mediocre. The brilliant acting of Robert Newton and the able support of the other members of the cast deserve a better story and a more pleasing production. Having seen the film, I left the cinema feeling miserable and glad of one thing, that being that it was over. The story is quite sordid, presumably true to life, but that need not necessarily be a favourable characteristic. It is a sad and familiar tale of a family thrust into poverty and tragedy by the vicious neglect of a faithless father, a tragedy which culminates in the violent crime of murder. The settings, whether interiors or exteriors, are dull and depressing. One has to pass alternately from the fogbound wintry dockside and slummy streets of Liverpool to the equally squalid rooms of the flats where the characters live. There are one or two heartrending scenes which are worthy of the acting, but the story starts on a dreary note, continues to grow drearier and ends on a sad note of doubt, as though the life of a sailor must needs be one of faithlessness.

The film's one romantic element, namely the love of the upright daughter for a young ship's engineer, a love almost thwarted by the added distress of this keen young man's two years of unemployment, is crowned by their marriage on his finding a ship. Even this is ill-fated, because it happens to

be the ship on which the father served. At their parting when he sails, the girl recalls her mother's sufferings and ponders over the possibility of a repetition in her own life, so that the film ends on a note of dread and doubt.

Fans of Robert Newton will want to see the film for the excellence of his performance. It seems out of place, however, that the Cockney accent should predominate rather than that of Merseyside.

To sum up: there is not much in this film to please you if you are out for an evening's entertainment. Above all, young people should be dissuaded from seeing it, for it contains nothing to enlighten or entertain them. There is quite enough that is sordid in real life without its being served up on the screen and presented as entertainment for the public.

J. R. C.

A TICKET TO TOMAHAWK

Starring: Dan Dailey, Anne Baxter, Rory Calhoun, Walter Brennan.

Director: Richard Sale. **Producer:**

Robert Bassler. Colour by Technicolor. *Certificate: A.*

Category: B. Running time: 89 minutes.

This is the first time I have seen Dan Dailey—after all, I am only a small time critic—yes, I insist, that is all. However, the point is that it was a happy surprise to discover that he is a genuine comedian. He has personality, acting ability and a fine sense of the ridiculous.

It is a preposterous story of course. A train has to make its first run on a newly-built railway to Tomahawk within a given time else the concession will lapse. It gets through, despite villainous rivals, whooping redskins and the absence of about forty miles of track. Anne Baxter renders assistance as the quick-shooting deputy sheriff. The film is lighthearted and interest is well sustained. In part it is a skit on current Westerns. There is very occasionally a tendency to allow one of the lesser characters to raise a cheap laugh.

T.

GUN CRAZY

Starring: Peggy Cummins, John Dall.
Producers: Frank and Maurice King.
Director: Joseph H. Lewis
 Released by United Artists.
Certificate: A. Category: B.

This is not a jolly film. Peggy Cummins, a fun fair pistol expert, is defeated in a shooting competition by John Dall. Thereafter they marry. Peggy is gun crazy and persuades John Dall to adopt with her a life of robbery at the point of a revolver. They have many exciting escapades, but eventually retribution overtakes them.

It is all very competently done, though there is little subtlety or power of characterisation.

Aristotle, I think, makes the point that drama provides a legitimate outlet for dangerous emotions. If you are gun crazy, even in the depth of your subconscious, see this film. It will cure you for life.

T.

THE FURIES

Starring: Barbara Stanwyck, Wendel Corey, Walter Huston. **Producer:** Hal Wallis. **Director:** Anthony Mann. **Distributors:** Paramount.
Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 109 minutes.

I fail to see what contribution this sort of film makes to life, art or human happiness. It is stiff with hate and stinks of morbidity. It is about a savage feud which exists between land and cattle owners; all the characters are endowed, of course, with film pseudo-toughness, which means that they are rude and rough and coarse in word and deed. In one sequence (to give but one example) Vance Jeffords (Barbara Stanwyck) flings a large pair of scissors at Flo Burnett (Judith Anderson), which slashes her eye and disfigures her for life. Believe me, it was good to get out of the Plaza to breathe some clean air and to talk to some decent, normal people.

This film is notorious for its rhythm of cruelty. It concludes with a murder which was a dirty murder, in the sense that the victim, T. C. Jeffords, the cattle baron (Walter Huston), was shot in the back by a woman called Mother Herrera.

E.

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO IN THE FOREIGN LEGION

Starring: Abbott and Costello, with Patricia Medina, Walter Slezak, Douglas Dumbrille. **Producer:** Douglas Arthur. **Director:** Charles Lamont. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 100 minutes.*

FANCY PANTS

Starring: Bob Hope and Lucille Ball, with Bruce Cabot, Jack Kirkwood. Technicolor. **Producer:** Robert L. Welch. **Director:** George Marshall. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 92 minutes.*

In both films the story is preposterous. In the first, Abbott and Costello are served up in the worn out sands of the desert, which have grown cold long since. In the second, Bob Hope has better material, which he dominates with his usual exquisite timing.

Foreign Legion has nothing to recommend it. Watching it seemed a waste of years.

Fancy Pants, preposterous though it be, has a logical beginning, middle and end. It opens with a curiously garden-party setting for a Gentleman and Players cricket match. It ends with Bob and his hoydenish girl friend (Lucille Ball) in flight from the town of Big Squaw, New Mexico. For the middle we have Bob acting as an American actor (not a very good one) who has to act as an English butler whom inexorable circumstances force into playing the part of an English peer in Big Squaw. Concentric circles of acting, if you like.

We can take it when Bob comes all over English. And it says much for the Americans that they are relied on to laugh at the funny side of social climbing American women. It is as simple as that. But they have laughed at that sort of thing before, very often.

We can respect the logic of lunacy without admitting its conclusions. All we do about it is to question the premises when it seems worth while. But here we have another triumph of Hope over experience.

Don't be put off by the fancy title.

X.

TRIO

Producer: Anthony Darnborough.
Directors: Ken Annakin and Harold French. A Sydney Box Production for Gainsborough.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 91 minutes.

This film is a repetition of the *Quartette* experiment, though for some reason it stopped at three; it was probably simply that three stories in this case filled the time that cinema patrons demand for the feature film. It begins, as did *Quartette* with an explanation in Somerset Maugham's familiar manner, as much as to say: "Don't blame me if you don't like it. These boys asked me if they could do it, and I don't like to disappoint them." So the boys got on with the job and produced *Trio*, which is simply three short films shown one after the other, in the pattern of the aforesaid *Quartette*. I do not know whether a "Duet" is contemplated, but if so, the sooner it is over and they get back to the principle, one story equals one film, the better. Three ones make three, and they will never really make one.

1—The Verger

Starring: James Hayter and Kathleen Harrison.

These two players are not what one would normally call great, judging by what we have seen of them. But in the character parts which they usually play, how perfect they are! One can almost see that Albert Foreman cannot read and write, which is really the point of the story. And Emma, who becomes his wife, never overplays herself as the shopkeeper's wife. But the story is too slight even for one-third of a film.

2—Mr. Knowall

Starring: Nigel Patrick and Anne Crawford.

Mr. Maugham claims to be nothing more than a storyteller, in the old tradition that begins with Chaucer. But he does that uncommonly well, and with the spoken word one avoids those tantalising bits of bad writing which sometimes blotch his novels. Nigel Patrick as Kelada, the man who knows

everything, is outstanding. By a pleasant little twist, Mr. Maugham in this story turns a character which one would normally detest into one for which one is compelled to have a sneaking regard.

3—Sanatorium

Starring: Jean Simmons and Michael Rennie.

Dramatically this is easily the best of the three and the quality of the play is maintained throughout. It is the only one of the three in fact that has the makings of a full-length picture. Evie Bishop and Major Templeton (we never seem to get as far as Christian names with the Major) are fellow-patients at a T.B. sanatorium. In the midst of the little personal dramas of the other patients, these two gradually fall in love and decide, after hearing the doctor's verdict that marriage will mean death for one and permanent illness for the other, that happiness is more important than a long life.

It may be simply that this being the best of the three one forgets that one has seen three films, but I feel that this is the inevitable result of this experiment. One's impression of the whole will depend on the last item, which is not satisfactory. Somerset Maugham has written any number of full-length stories. Let some of these be filmed.

U.

ROCKETSHIP X.M.

Starring: Lloyd Bridges, Osa Massen, John Emery, Noah Beery, Jr., Hugh O'Brian, Morris Ankrum.

Producer and Director: Kurt Neumann. An "Exclusive" Lippert Production. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 70 minutes.

A film that tries to record what happened in the attempt of a Rocketship to go to the moon and back is dependent for its success on the imagination, credulity and capacity for emotional strain of the audience. The scientifically-minded, on the look-out for defects, might be sceptical, while the lovers of the fantastic, especially children, would have all the emotional thrills they could want. Certainly it would be difficult for the average film-goer to remain quite calm when the

crew is rendered unconscious by the rocket's velocity owing to an error in the fuel mixture.

When the crew recover it is discovered that they have gone right out of their course and are making for Mars on which they land. Here they discover relics of a high state of civilisation brought to an end by atomic blast. Two of the crew are killed by huge stones hurled by the savages they meet. The two sound members of the crew and a third who is wounded and

unable to help, begin their flight back to earth. Before they hurtle to destruction, owing to shortage of fuel, they are able to make radio contact with headquarters and record some information.

All the actors play their parts well. The possibility of controlling world affairs from another planet so as to prevent war and the effects of atomic blast on Mars fit in with a modern mood.

W.

Some Recent Documentaries

THE STORY OF THE POPE

Documentary, with commentary written and spoken by Rt. Rev. Mgr. Fulton Sheen. A Cornell Film. **Distributors:** Exclusive. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 45 minutes approx.*

This is an excellent film essay on the life of Pope Pius XII. With material derived from news reels, library stock and film specially shot for the occasion, a very pleasing outline of the life and work of His Holiness has been assembled. There is an introduction spoken by Cardinal Spellman and the beautiful commentary is written and spoken by Mgr. Fulton Sheen. The film was made for the American market so that it is not to be wondered at that the accent is strongly American. However, this in no way detracts from the merit of the film for English Catholics. I strongly suggest that local Catholic organisations make a point of asking their local cinema managers to show this film. There will be a shorter version available for those exhibitors who think their public will not take the longer one but it is well worth anyone's while to see the full version.

The story is one that even non-Catholics must find of interest in its description of the events that led up to the consecration of Mgr. Pacelli as bishop, then later his elevation to the College of Cardinals and finally his coronation as Pope. One shot, of which I have a still, showing the Pope as Nuncio in Berlin distributing food and clothes to the Germans, was omitted when I saw the film at the special show arranged for the Catholic Press. This is

a pity: for it illustrates most forcefully the fact that the Church knows no distinction of race or creed where the mercy and charity of God are concerned. The commentator does make the point that the Pope invited soldiers of every nation to the Vatican during the war, and there is a moving scene in which soldiers of various countries, some wounded, are waiting to be received by the Common Father of Christendom.

V.

W. B. YEATS: A Tribute

Directors: John Desmond Sheridan and George Fleischmann. Commentary spoken by Cyril Cusack. Poetry spoken by Michael MacLiammoir and Siobhan McKenna.

"I know these places. I am made of them, deeper than words . . ."

Thus a younger Irish poet meditating on his birthplace; and if what he says is true of his kind then this beautifully photographed panorama of the natural backgrounds of Yeats' life is a brief biography of the man himself. For what the makers of this most attractive little film have done is to string together, to the tune of some of Yeats' more famous, happy and peaceful lyrics, the beauties of Coole, of Lisadell, of Innisfree; and of the scores of other pieces of Sligo (and occasionally Dublin) whose names and shapes always haunted the poet's mind.

It is true that there is here little enough of Yeats the nationalist, the spiritist, or the undone romantic: the Yeats of the film is the Yeats of the Edwardian anthologies, and some may think a poor relation of the angry, peer-

ing, and often shocked "weather-worn Triton amid the streams" of the twenties and thirties; Yeats of the epitaph. Well, I suppose that the answer of the producers (The Cultural Relations Committee and the National Film Institute of Ireland) is that they never intended anything so personal. What they have done is by any other standards a handsome tribute. It was a mistake, perhaps, to take an almost slothful tempo for both the pace of the camera's pans and tilts and the speed of speech in the commentary and verse; certainly a fault to maintain it so constantly. Audiences need waking up every so often. All three speakers are well-chosen. But George Fleischmann is the chief artist of the film. Somehow as his camera glides like a lightning seagull over the waters of the West, he has sucked in and distilled the sad and peaceful loveliness of that siren country. Nobody will see this film without wishing to go there. G. T.

THE MAGIC TOUCH FROM THE GROUND UP

Crown Film Unit Productions. Made by the C.O.I. for the Economic Information Unit. Running time: 10 minutes each.

Since the end of the war scientists have discovered how new materials and new processes can be used to increase our export trade and to supply some of the things we previously had to import. *The Magic Touch*, an attractive film with excellent photography and lucid commentary, shows some of the ways in which we are becoming self-supporting. The harvesting of young grass, subsequently dried over furnaces and used as cattle fodder; the use of marginal land, hitherto left waste, for growing timber; the harnessing of our rivers for hydro-electric schemes; the use of the surplus heat produced at Battersea Power Station for heating a big block of flats on the other side of the river; the production of detergents (soap substitutes) from petroleum; the by-products of seaweed and the extraction of magnesium from sea water are all described. Of interest to schools and general audiences.

One-fifth of the national income is being invested in rebuilding, modernising and expanding the productive

machine by which we live. *From the Ground Up* shows some of the results of this expenditure. It touches upon the electrification of the coal mines, the building of new rolling mills and blast furnaces, the modernising of our railways, the rebuilding of our cities, the mechanisation of farming and the building of new generating stations. Although less well photographed than *The Magic Touch*, this film, too, will be of interest to most classes of audiences. The commentator's complacent statement: "We all of us have plenty of money to spend nowadays", is liable to provoke derisive laughter, but this is a minor blemish.

"*The Magic Touch*" and "*From the Ground Up*" are available in 16mm. on free loan from the Central Film Library, Government Building, Bromyard Avenue, Acton, W.3. M. M.

WATCH YOUR STEP

Produced by Basic Films for the C.O.I. 12 minutes.

Aside from deliberate non-observance of factory safety regulations, many industrial accidents are caused through plain thoughtlessness, and this applies to the building industry as well as any other. This film shows how some of these accidents are caused, and how they could have been avoided. A neat and concisely made job, but mainly of value to those working in the trade.

J. A.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF PLANT

Produced by Basic Films for the C.O.I. 11 minutes.

The modern builder uses mechanised equipment unknown, and possibly unnecessary, to the Eskimo erecting an igloo. But cranes, bulldozers and other machinery need oil, water and grease, and a concrete mixer usually works more efficiently if cleaned out after every shift. This short and well made film shows workers in the building industry how to take care of the machinery they use, and how, if they don't, not only does the machinery suffer, but also their fellow-workers who have to wait and lose their bonuses while the damage is repaired. Excellent for those concerned with the job, but of little interest to anyone else.

J. A.

THE TASK BEFORE THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

Produced by Basic Films for the
C.O.I. 22 minutes.

One of a series of three films primarily designed for operatives working in the building industry, this film surveys all aspects of building from the familiar bricklayer with a trowel to his equally skilled counterpart handling the latest mechanised equipment. New methods of spraying cement, trenching, and clearing sites with bulldozers are shown, along with glimpses into the modern system of training the builders of the future.

Unlike so many films designed for a specialist audience, this film is of interest to the layman, and the wide range of activities covered by the building industry should be of value to students at senior and technical schools.

On the whole well designed, some of the camera shots leave a certain amount to be desired, particularly the shots taken from a moving train; it is preferable to be able to see quite clearly what is happening. And what did

happen when a certain train pulled up at a station? Did the cameraman get thrown out on his head on the platform?

J. A.

ERRATA

Faulty proof-reading gave a "C" to the recent Bing Crosby film *Riding High*. It should have been a "B" classification.

It has been pointed out that our reviewer may have overlooked the fact that Bing Crosby played a character waiting to marry a woman who was waiting for her divorce decree to come through. We are assured that he included it in his reference to "doubtful ethics", though he is of the opinion that in England, the question of the immorality of divorce is more obvious than the other financial immoralities accepted in this film. He therefore considered the cautionary note with reference to the confidence trick the more necessary and sufficient.

Categories were omitted in the case of four other recent films. *State Secret*, B (177); *East Side, West Side*, A (182); *On the Town*, B (175); *South of St. Louis*, B (175).

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Art of the Actor—I

The Great Sara Allgood

By Gabriel Fallon



Sara Allgood

The Power of a Voice

"Gee! Is that Sara Allgood?" said a young American visitor, on seeing her portrait in the vestibule of the Abbey Theatre. "I've heard a lot about her." "Of course you have," said Lennox Robinson, "I don't think we've ever had an actress to compare with her." No, I don't think we've had.

The most remarkable thing about Sara Allgood is not (as you might imagine) her very beautiful voice, deep-toned, rich and vibrant; it is her use of it. Few realise the arduous and constant training necessary to achieve that perfection of control which can

THIS is the first of two articles by Gabriel Fallon, the well-known Irish dramatic critic. Mr. Fallon has been called the Agate of Ireland. Comparisons are not always wise and in any case it would be truer to say that Mr. Fallon is entirely himself. Still, the comparison may help our readers to understand that they have here the reflections of a writer who understands and loves and can describe the art of the theatre as can few others.

He has chosen as his subjects two great Irish players. His analysis of the art of Sara Allgood may enable some of our readers to appreciate better the work of this outstanding actress of stage and screen as well as to throw a light on the skill which she has brought to her parts in many a film like "How Green Was My Valley", "The Keys of the Kingdom" or "The Young in Heart".

The next article will deal with the work of Barry Fitzgerald.

freeze the hearts of the hearers with a single note. It is a voice which possesses the rare quality of retaining its smoothness throughout the entire gamut of expression. Harshness is stranger to it even in its highest emotional stresses. (Now that I come to think of it, I have never heard her shriek.) Consider the power of this voice alone. Analyse it (if you can) as it reaches out to those tense white faces to which, in Yeats's *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, it carries in memorable cadences the simple story of the poor old woman whose four green fields had been filched from her. Mark the intonations rising to compelling

prophecy as (her identity but half revealed by the subtle quality of Miss Allgood's art) she proclaims that "many who are red-cheeked shall be pale-cheeked for her sake". Listen to it now as it passes to a chant that has a strange, unearthly luminous quality about it. The old woman, an old woman no longer, moves across the threshold, but the spell of the voice holds us still: "They shall be remembered for ever." How many torches of nationality have been kindled and rekindled at this flaming talent that leaped from beneath the dark hood of her Kathleen Ni Houlihan? Such is the power of the stage in the possession of a great artist.

The Personality of the Actor

It has been said with truth that acting at its finest is a confusing hypnosis; that the flames and fire of a Duse, the haunt and magic of a Bernhardt, are such in their effect that they disarm even the most discerning critic and defy analysis. Indeed, this argument has been used in an attempt to deny to acting the status of an art. It would be so easy to say: "Acting is not an art. Sara Allgood is a great artist who happened to be an actress." Miss Allgood herself would, I know, be the very first to affirm that acting is an art in every meaning of the term. There is a quality whereby the images of things absent are so represented to the mind that we seem to see them with our eyes and have them present before us. This quality—the quality of imagination—may be so thoroughly developed by the actor that he will have complete power over his emotions. The thorough development of the imagination (which is the whole secret of the art of acting) will eventually lead to the point at which, the imaginative chord being struck, the whole physical nature of the actor will respond. This gift of imaginative sympathy Miss Allgood possesses in a very high degree. The result is confusedly apprehended by an audience as "charm", "magnetism" or by that never-failing word, "personality".

"A Few Moments Pause"

That Miss Allgood's art as an actress does not lie in her voice alone, or in

her ability to use that voice, is amply illustrated in what must be counted as a supremely great moment in one of her greatest rôles—Juno, in O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, a portrayal in which she has never been surpassed. In Act III, after a scene of guffawing humour between Joxer and Captain Boyle, with the audience ready to titter upon the slightest provocation, Juno answers to the author's simple directions: "Mrs. Boyle enters: it is apparent from the serious look on her face that something has happened. She takes off her hat and coat without a word and puts them by. She then sits down near the fire, and there is a few moments pause." That is all. Sara Allgood's entrance will not easily be forgotten by those who saw it. It is no exaggeration to say that her appearance literally compelled the audience to quiet, and held it for long after in a frozen silence. She never failed in this, no matter how boisterous the audience had been. Not a word was spoken by her. She did not even sigh. Her movements were few; she made no gesture. On the contrary, she seemed to have shrunk from the effects of her inward consciousness. Juno simply comes home again, but, in that coming, the art of Sara Allgood makes tragically memorable the words in which the author has portrayed the scene: "She then sits down . . . and there is a few moments pause." One feels instinctively in the presence of great tragedy.

Economy of Style

Perhaps the most notable quality in her acting is the quality which is to be found in the work of all great artists—economy in the use of the instruments of her art. One single gesture taken, one look, one tone, where the less talented will take six or seven and use them to less effect. Her emotion, even that surging emotion which she expresses in *Riders to the Sea*, is curbed with a magnificent restraint. I turn to my diary for the following account of my experience as a young actor playing a "walk-on" part in Synge's one-act tragedy. It is as near as description can go to the effect of being on the stage with Sara Allgood.

"Chapeaux bas! Enter Miss Sara

Allgood. Maura has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. Cathleen and Nora kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel at the door. A rich deep throbbing voice welling up from an abyss of sorrow. The drip, drip, drip through the tense silence of the water with which you had drenched the sail cloth. 'They're all gone now . . . ' Something that clutches the heart inside of you and freezes the very marrow in your bones as you kneel there in a white bawneen on a stage that is a stage no longer. The voice rises, billows, falls and rises again. ' . . . and there is nothing more the sea can do to me . . . ' You hear behind you the deep anger of the Atlantic surge strangely menacing its way through the Abbey scene dock. The drip . . . drip . . . drip is slower now. The vocative sorrow rises and falls, falls and rises and is silent. You hear the voice of Nora whispering, 'She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well.' The tension holds and spell is still unbroken. Then with a lift as of a ninth great wave the voice rises to its final cadence: 'They're all together this time, and the end is come.' The stage is drowned beneath a deluge of falling waters. 'May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul and on Michael's soul . . . and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the souls of everyone who is left living in the world.' A long time after that you hear the voice of the stage-manager shouting 'Clear stage, please,' and somebody kicks you and tells you to get up. Great art is like that. What is more, it defies analysis."

"The Heart Warm and the Head Cool"

Unrestrained emotion is not acting; it is nothing more or less than emotion without restraint, often a matter for a doctor. "For my part," said Joseph

Jefferson, "I like to have the heart warm and the head cool." This is a quality essential to great acting, which Sara Allgood possesses to a remarkable degree. I have frequently tested it on the stage, and in moments of greatly expressed emotion have spoken to her in that soft ventriloquial whisper which is so often a necessity in stage situations, and which even the sharpest member of an audience fails to detect. She has always responded, being in perfect possession and clear control of her "non-acting" self, that self which Coquelin calls No. 1. On one occasion, in a tragic scene which called for no speech on her part, she not only answered me, but carried on a conversation (as such conversations are carried on, with long intervals between the remarks) while she audibly sobbed and real tears (not film ones) coursed down her cheeks. The conversation was not altogether foreign to the play, but it had no part in her characterisation; nevertheless, the sobbing and the tears swept on; nor did they abate till her scene in the play was over. .

Sara Allgood has played in most of the world's great capitals, and at one time seemed likely to settle down in London. There she made many appearances on the British screen and played in one of the first talkies directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Then Hollywood sent for her; and there she lives under Californian skies while she still retains her name in the Dublin Telephone Directory (a gesture to call her back, perhaps). Her parish priest, Rev. Fr. Conlon, while holidaying in Dublin, told me that she is one of the most popular persons in Hollywood and a great Catholic. Monsignor Devlin had the same story to tell. But we who know her so well accept that as commonplace. She still corresponds with her old colleagues but from the tone of her last letter I wouldn't say that it's likely that she wants the Abbey or that the Abbey wants her. More's the pity. For she was one of that talented band, the first Abbey Company, which compelled James Douglas to write: "*We have at our doors a dramatic miracle, and many of us know it not.*"

Films and Strips Useful in the Primary School

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

G.B. Instructional Ltd., Aintree Road,
Perivale, Greenford, Middx.
British Instructional Ltd., Film House,
Wardour Street, W.1.
Common Ground, Sydney Place, S.W.7.

(All Silent)

Milk

G.B.I. FS.732, 1 reel, 3 to 4 mins.

This is one of a series of short films showing the sources of some staple foods, very suitable for town-bred children who sometimes have extraordinary misconceptions on this subject. A herd of milking cows are seen grazing in the meadow and returning to the byre to be washed and milked. Then the sterilisation, bottling, delivery and consumption finish the story. The sterilisation process is not obvious to the uninitiated and the teacher is advised to get clear on this point before the children demand the explanation. There are simple clear captions, and the short running time allows for two showings with questions and discussion between them in a normal class period.

Other titles in this series are: *Fish from the Sea, Beef, Mutton, Hen and Eggs, Fruit from Trees*, etc.

Roots

G.B.I. FS.808 1 reel, 7 mins.

is the first of a series which show, very simply, the functions of the various parts of a plant and lead to a final summing up in the *Germination and Growth of a Plant*. The method of magnifying and speeding up might be confusing to children, and these two devices which greatly aid the exposition, should be carefully prepared beforehand. Possibly the best use of these films is as a revision, in the last

year of primary school life, of what has been previously and slowly observed in classroom experiments with beans in blotting paper, etc. *Roots* shows, very clearly, the growth and development of the roots, steady and feeding the plant, and relates the underground activity to the growth of the seedling above the soil and to the changing seasons. There are a few simple captions and plenty of time is given for the slower readers to grasp them. A Teacher's Pamphlet (G.B. Film Library, price 9d.) summarises the series, which covers also stems, leaves, flowers, pollination and seed dispersal.

The Fishmonger

G.B.I. FS.947, 10 mins.

"A Junior Activity film based on Exploration of the neighbourhood and its workers"—and excellent for its purpose. The direct method of asking butcher, baker and candlestick maker all about their life and work has met with gracious and kindly response, but this is likely to fail as activity methods become, as they should do, the normal thing, and our daily workers feel that they must get on with their own rather than the teacher's job. Films of this kind come to the rescue: here the children are taken through the fishmonger's day without trouble to himself. Billingsgate occupies a good half of the running time and very interesting subject matter it makes presented thus to the visual sense alone. The business of fishmongering is fully and pleasantly shown with detail and live incidents suggesting profitable lines of further study. A helpful pamphlet accompanies the film and can be bought separately. The series also includes *The Sewerman, The Postman* and *The Policeman*.

Wild Rabbits

FS.4688, 5 mins.

and
Bees

FS.4587, 5 mins.

Produced by G. B. Instructional Ltd., with the co-operation of the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education. These are two delightful little nature study films; the first shows rabbits in their natural surroundings; taking cover, eating, drinking, cleaning, etc., with plenty of time given to observe behaviour and physical features; the second, of bees, in a garden hive, is not so clear in detail or so easily followed but would be nevertheless very valuable as the living illustration to lessons on the bee for junior children.

These two films are not coloured but this does not appear as a disadvantage for their lively attractiveness immediately transports one to field or garden;

16mm. Advisory Service

We have for some time been thinking out ways and means of assisting the large number of 16mm. enthusiasts who, we feel, form the backbone of the Catholic Film Institute. As our readers must know by this time, we aim ultimately to produce a body of film technicians who, though amateur in status, will be professional in standard and will have a vocational approach to the whole question of the use of film by Catholics.

As a further step in this direction we hope shortly to devote a section of *Focus* to the needs of the sub-standard enthusiasts. In the meantime we have secured the services of a panel of sub-standard experts who have agreed to answer the technical queries of any of our readers who may care to take advantage of their services. If you have a problem connected with 16mm. projector or camera work, send it along to Sub-standard Service, Blue Cottage, Summer Place Mews, London, S.W.7. Questions will be answered in a subsequent issue of *Focus*.

whereas in the series *Junior Educational Adventures* the colour, so important to children, has troubled one adult: are the foxgloves in Scotland a tint of vermilion? But this is an unfair beginning to a review of *Through the Woodlands* (G.B.I. FSC. 4517, 1 reel), a very natural and instructive nature ramble, which ends in a study of trees being felled and transported and new young trees being nurtured to replace them. This film might serve to interest children in the craft of nature observations. To the *Top of Ben Nevis* (G.B.I. FSC.4508, 1 reel), gives a very good idea of mountainous country and shows something of the wild loveliness of Scotland; it ends with shots of rock-climbing which proved of much interest to London children of 9 and 10 to whom it was lately shown. Both these films come under the general heading of Junior Activity films in which series each film represents the experience of a boy or girl with companions during a holiday and the principal character, about 10 years old, tells what was seen and done—the narration being conveyed by short, well-presented captions. (See *Focus*, October 1949, for review of *Following the River*, a sequence in this series.)

The Fireman

B.I.F. ES.42, Running time: 11 mins.

Hire: 6/- one day, 1/6 each subsequent day.

"People Who Help Us Series." This film shows the daily routine at the fire station and gives a good general view of the fireman's duties and responsibilities. The principal figure is the driver of the fire engine; he is seen arriving at the station, on parade, at lectures, caring for his equipment, answering a call (the fire being of a mild nature and easily mastered, does not evoke fear) and finally ending with a cup of tea. A clearer view of his personal equipment (one could only tell from the notes that it was an axe he wore at his belt) and how his engines worked would have added much to the interest but probably too much to the length, which is just within the limits of classroom usefulness. At any rate it was much appreciated by children varying from 6 to 10 years of age, especially the greasy pole; and the excellent and exhaustive teaching notes suggest ways

of getting the maximum amount of observation from the children. In this series is also *The Engine Driver*, *The Postman* and *They Bring You Fish*.

The Ugly Duckling

27 frames, in colour, Common Ground (Series: Fairy Tales of Other Lands).

Hans Andersen is great literature and one's first reaction to this title may be "What a pity!" Translation from language to language rarely satisfies, and transportation from one medium to another is a yet more delicate operation in which loss is bound to occur. But Mary Crittall has adapted this story (in short passages to correspond to the pictures) with much skill and retains both the charm and spirit of the original. The pictures are conceived in the same spirit and great care has been taken to be faithful to Danish background. The colouring is bright but pleasant and harmonious, never crude and the result will certainly prove a class "picture-book" very popular with the sixes and sevens.

FILM STRIPS

The Story of Writing

B.I.F. 114, 7/6 to buy, not for hire

The temptation in illustrating this subject would be to put too much on one strip, but this has been avoided. A well-selected group of 17 pictures show the main stages in the development of writing, from the cave drawing to the modern alphabet, and could serve as the starting point of study in many directions. A specially interesting sequence is six frames giving the story of the letter A. The other topics dealt with are Picture Writing, the Rosetta Stone and the development of some Roman forms.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Until further notice all communications for the Catholic Film Institute should be addressed to: The Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

16mm. SOUND FILM LIBRARY

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A Legend of Norfolk
Visitation
Out of the Darkness
Rome of the Pilgrims
Monsieur Vincent
Farrebique
To Live in Peace

Four Steps in the Clouds
The Sacrifice We Offer
(*Silent Version also available*)
Family Affair
The Atom and You
The Vatican of Pius XII
Holy Year

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Cover Personality

LEO
GENN

The writing of these cover notes is not always an easy thing. Some readers think that we are following a mistaken policy because we do not attempt to copy the glamour magazine example and publish what one friend called "heart throb" pictures. On the other hand, another friend has announced that we are writing for "a public that does not exist". So what? The point is that our cover personalities are intended to stimulate interest in film personalities who are something more than pin-ups, whether male or female. We have an idea that all too little is written about film players who are really worth while and far too much about persons who are employed because their physiognomy pleases the passing fancy of some impressionable magnate. We shall continue to hope that readers are mainly composed of the more intelligent types who realise that worthwhile films require worthwhile actors as well as worthwhile stories.

Leo Genn, in spite of the implications of the above paragraph, has all the qualities looked for in the popular glamour star. Fortunately he has managed to avoid the restricting embrace of the fans and so has remained free to develop a career on stage and screen which has contributed not a little to the prestige of British players in both media.

The quality which at once suggests itself as most characteristic of Leo Genn's work is its unselfishness. His part in *The Wooden Horse* is a good example of what I mean. This film demands above all else that the actors work as a team. There is no room for stars. It would have destroyed the balance of the story to let one man gather limelight more than another. Yet the part of Peter (Leo Genn) is the leading rôle and it would have been so easy for Genn to steal the camera.

Leo Genn has been on the London and New York stage since 1930. His films date from 1937 when he made *Jump for Glory* for Criterion, *Cavalier of the Streets* for Paramount, *The Rat* for Wilcox, and *The Drum* for London Films. In 1938 came *Kate Plus Ten*

and in 1939 *Ten Days in Paris* for Columbia.

Like so many other British film actors, Leo Genn first began to make his personality felt across the screen as a result of the sincerity which he brought to bear upon films concerning the war. He was featured in *Contra-band* in 1941 and then spent several years with the Forces until 1944 when he played in *The Way Ahead* for Two Cities. Then followed the first of the films in which his admirers began actually to look for his name among the credit titles. His part as the Herald in *Henry V* created a great impression which was justified by his next appearance in *Caesar and Cleopatra*. This film was so filled with first-class actors playing small parts that it may well be that Leo Genn will not be remembered save by the enthusiasts. However, his next rôle, as the surgeon in *Green For Danger*, will certainly come to mind for its cool, detached efficiency, a mark noticeable also in the best-known of his film-parts, that of the doctor in *Snake Pit* opposite Olivia de Havilland. He contributed considerably to the air of documentary authenticity which this film achieved, though the outstanding performance of Miss de Havilland, not unnaturally, caused the high standard work of her colleagues to lose something of its due reward with the critics.

Leo Genn remained in the U.S.A. to fulfil several Broadway acting engagements. He also made two other films which have not, so far, been seen in this country; *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *The Velvet Touch*. His most recent British film, apart from *The Wooden Horse*, was *No Place for Jennifer* in which he appeared with Beatrice Campbell. Once again, the air of competence and unselfishness is noticeable and makes one more than ever convinced that the best films are those in which a good story is played by a team of first-rate actors without emphasis being wasted by star headlines and overlighting. He is at present in Rome working with many other British film players in the heavily publicised M.-G.-M. production of *Quo Vadis?*

JOHN VINCENT.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Children and the Cinema

Sir,

Important and urgent as is the work for better cinema conditions for children to which the Hon. Mrs. Bower has devoted her talents, I feel that it should not be overlooked that there is more than one approach to the problem, even from the Catholic angle.

I wish it to be clearly understood that the question of children and films is, in my view, almost the first in the order of importance from the point of view of Catholic film action but I fear lest the enthusiasm generated by some of our friends may tend to obscure rather than to illumine the roots of the problem. In spite of the particular and undoubtedly interesting examples which can be produced to show that certain children have nightmares after film-shows or experience fright while at the cinema, this does not necessarily *prove* the danger of the cinema for children. Nor are the pictures, now so widely publicised, *evidence* that would convince a court of anything more than that children (and adults) often react with expressions of fear to plays and other situations which, in their complete context, they actually enjoy. I have a photo, taken at a convent school, of a number of children watching a Punch and Judy show. There are expressions of horror on the faces of many of the children at the sadistic exhibition they are witnessing. This does not, however, *prove* that Punch and Judy is harmful for children (though I personally have vivid recollections of nausea when watching these puppets as a child).

At the Departmental Committee, before which I was invited to appear, the terms of reference demanded "evidence" of the effect of films upon children. This, I maintain, it is extremely difficult to provide, at least in the sense in which the word is used by lawyers. What we and other interested persons can do, parents, magistrates, physicians, teachers, is to provide

"opinion": quite a different, but very valuable thing.

The only persons who can give true evidence are the children themselves. Even here, of course, due allowance has to be made for emotional and other circumstances which colour or modify their accounts. Thus, though the letter from the ex-reformatory boy, quoted by Mrs. Bower, is extremely interesting, it is not, of course, *proof* that films *cause delinquency*, but only that this boy found example in the films he chose to see. In like manner, many another lad might find himself watching points on social behaviour with benefit to himself and others.

The root cause of child delinquency is and always has been unsuitable home conditions. Other delinquents there are, from refined homes, but these demand radically different remedial treatment from that meted out to the unfortunate victims of circumstances. Films are, of course, like so many other things, an *occasion* of delinquency.

The problem of children and the cinema revolves round another important point, that of parental responsibility. The majority of children are pleasant, law-abiding personalities, like their parents. The majority of films made and shown are quite unsuitable for children to see, mainly because they are too sophisticated in texture. It is the responsibility of the parents to control the cinema fare offered to their children. Until parents are themselves more aware of the kind of films available, understand more of the processes involved in criticising films, little, I fear, will be done. One thing is sure. Films are not, in themselves, bad. They are a legitimate diversion. They are, indeed, as Pope Pius XI said, "capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see them". But in order that they may be "bearers of light and a positive guide to what is good" a great deal of effort is needed from Catholics in general and

parents in particular. That is why the Catholic Film Institute exists in this country and why *FOCUS—A FILM REVIEW* is published. Let us turn our minds to the problems involved but let us not be induced too easily by emotional considerations to bypass the basic problem, namely, that films of all kinds, as well as those for children, need to be understood and appreciated by Catholics in order that Catholics may have the right to demand the films they want to see.

There are many more issues involved in this question, of course. Perhaps our readers will continue the debate. It will be a useful thing to do.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN A. V. BURKE.

Sir,

I should like to let you know how much I appreciate your magazine *Focus*, the only film magazine in English which gives a balanced and intelligent appraisal of films.

. . . I have used it constantly with discussion groups in film appreciation, and found it not only helpful, but most essential. *Focus* is an admirable text for members of film discussion and appreciation groups.

I consider that this magazine should be in the hands of all parents, priests, teachers, youth group leaders, librarians and all who train, direct and guide young people . . .

Wishing you all success,

Yours sincerely,

BRIGID REDMOND,

County Librarian,

Wicklow County Library.

Sir,

I imagine brickbats rather than bouquets constitute a large proportion of your post, so I feel impelled to tell you how much I appreciate the film reviews you record, and also the index to them, which you have just circulated.

In passing, I was extremely interested to note the reactions of your reviews to two recent war films, *They Were Not Divided* and *Battleground*. I agree entirely that the latter film had a truer quality, and is a better mirror of the real thing . . . in its lack of false heroics.

Yours sincerely,

D. B. WALLACE.

Film Strips on the Mass

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SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 7 and 8)

<i>Adieu Leonard</i>	(B) (211)
<i>Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, The</i>	(B) (238)
<i>And Baby Makes Three</i>	(A) (211)
<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>	(C) (239)
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<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

OCTOBER 1950

No. 10

WHAT OF RELIGIOUS FILMS?

It is frequently assumed by friendly but innocent enquirers that the business of the Catholic Film Institute is solely to concern itself with the making and/or distribution of religious films. This is to start a very large red-herring. Pages and pages would need to be covered to express all we think about religious films. It would be necessary in the first place to define "religious" films. It would then be found that while *Going My Way* is not a religious film but a film about religious people, *The Broken Arrow*, for example, is a basically religious film, though the characters are mainly Red Indians and white Americans attempting to find a formula for living peaceably together.

It is not our purpose to pursue that line of discussion here. We would like to direct our readers' attention to the *Focus Film Course* article in this issue. Mr. Buchanan has been campaigning in favour of the truly religious film for many a long year now. He has not given up hope that one day there will be a stream of religious films reaching every corner of the country as there is, in fact, a continuous stream of secular, not to say pagan, films reaching every corner of the country today.

Before that dream becomes a reality, much thought and true sympathy must be given to the aims and objects of the Catholic Film Institute. It is sad that, so far, little repercussion with regard to the excellent articles in the *Focus Film Course* has been noticed among

our readers. It is clear that there is still a large section of the Catholic community, clerical and laic, unaware of the problems presented by the film in the world today. Still less, apparently, are they aware of the Catholic answer. After all, people get the films they deserve.

Among the films about religious people, of course, there is a growing number of pleasing presentations like *Going My Way*, *Bells of St. Mary's*, *Come to the Stable* or *Song of Bernadette*, which, whatever their merits artistically, or from the point of view of good taste, can at least be said to be helping to break down prejudice in the minds of a large number of people otherwise unacquainted with men and women who wear dog-collars and wimples.

We are glad to notice that the enterprising firm of Ron Harris are adding new titles to their list of films of this kind and we are sure that our readers will take note of this fact and act accordingly. *The Story of the Pope*, of course, is another matter altogether and we cannot too strongly urge that it be shown by all our readers who possess projectors.

In this connection, the M.-G.-M. list of classical films should not be overlooked. They are the answer for a long time to come to the harassed schoolteacher trying to build up programmes. The M.-G.-M. list at 2s. 6d. a copy is valuable reading for those with schoolchildren to cater for.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 9—THE RELIGIOUS FILM

I am sure you have often watched newspaper vans careering along, weaving in and out of traffic, hurling bales of the latest editions at street vendors and dumping piles at news-agents, almost without stopping. Thousands of these vans in all big cities supplement the work of the paper trains, distributing newspapers to everyone, everywhere.

The press had a monopoly of news until film-news appeared, soon followed by radio, spoken news being not only the fastest, of course, but also capable of being the most dangerous. I mention these facts because upon high-powered distribution depends the spreading of every kind of message to the man-in-the-street. Most of us take the newspaper and the news-reel for granted. How it gets into the letter-box or on to the screen is not our concern. But behind successful distribution is highly organised machinery. Film depends utterly upon distribution. Copies of a feature film or news-reel are circulated to hundreds of cinemas simultaneously. Hundreds of thousands of newspapers are read daily, nightly, by vast numbers of people who never open books at all.

The influence of press, radio and news-reel is not solely due to simple presentation and smooth, easy-to-read writing. It is also due to *continuity of output*. Day after day after day. The impact is terrific. Therefore, the proven rule to reach and influence a maximum number of people is to *widely distribute a continuous supply*. There is neither a continuous output of religious films, nor wide distribution.

Let us not, therefore, think too much at this juncture about subject-matter, nor become pre-occupied with the respective merits of fictional and factual religious films. Instead, we should concentrate on the great problem of *circulating* films of spiritual value. The true religious film which does not

sacrifice essentials to meet the demands of the box office cannot secure commercial cinema release, of course (*Monsieur Vincent* being an exception). What then? We turn to non-theatrical distribution methods and find well-organised networks for showing governmental and industrial films, but few outlets for religious films.

The Catholic Film Institute has long seen this problem and is, as you know, building up its own system for showing the films in its growing library, employing, wherever possible, 16mm. projectors in convents and schools, and by hiring small theatres in London for private performances.

But the impact is not strong enough. The newsreel is still far ahead. The problem, which is really two-headed, must be overcome. On the production side is the need for a *continuous* series of short films which, for want of a better description, may be called religious news-reels, to appear regularly and keep the torch burning whilst other short and feature films demanding slower construction are being made. On the distribution side is the need for a census to be taken of 16mm. projectors, both privately owned and possessed by organisations, which are available for religious film shows. There is urgent need, too, for a projection van equipped to show films in remote parts, carrying its own electric power so that the religious film may reach villages still lit by candles and oil lamps. At present, there are many such mobile cinemas, employed for industrial and governmental purposes, but very few for religious work.

And so the next time you are almost bowled over by a dashing newspaper van, remember it is part of a giant distribution system, in competition with, but also strengthened by, the news-reel and radio news. Do not rest

until there is also a continuous supply of religious films being distributed far and wide, carrying the Word of God to millions as incessantly as is the word of man today. The urgency of the matter becomes apparent when we

realise that the result of continuous and widely distributed news and views of a political and material nature is that an astonishingly large number of people have come to mistake the word of man for the Word of God.

No. 3—A Positive Approach to the Cinema

A Priest Looks at the Cinema

By . . . **JOHN PREEDY**

The Pope and Films

Before daring to write this article I took another look at the encyclical letter of Pius XI, significantly opening with the words *Vigilanti Cura* (with vigilant care). The Pope sees (none better) the dangers of the film used with bad intent or sordid motive; he indicates what could be done for good by this powerful invention and he praises the good which has already been done, and done, be it noted, by the ordinary commercial film industry. He even deprecates bungling amateur attempts to make motion pictures on worthwhile themes. Let it be done professionally he says. Those who dedicate themselves to the noble cause of raising the standard "must make full use of the technical ability of experts and not permit the waste of effort and of money by the employment of amateurs". The Pope was no Puritan scattering condemnations all over the place and damning films as evil. He is firm about evil films, but he praises the good ones and encourages all to improve the standard. "Why," he says, "should there be a question merely of avoiding what is evil? The motion picture should not be simply a means of diversion, a light relaxation to occupy an idle hour; with its magnificent power, it can and must be a bearer of light and a positive power to what is good." He goes on to outline a policy for the Bishops to

seek to bring into line criticism, public opinion and the co-operation of the film industry.

It would, therefore, be nonsense for a priest to condemn the cinema wholesale, and certainly this priest will make no such attempt.

Public Taste—Reflected or Moulded

The motion picture is an inescapable part of contemporary life. It is an art and so validly subject to criticism. It is also an industry sensitive to the murmurs of an oracle called Box Office, which regulates demand and supply. This modern industry does show signs of responsibility in spite of unpredictable aberrations. And it is with these aberrations that one wonders, as one does of the popular press, are these values and these current opinions being reflected or moulded? The answer is terrifying either way, except that aberrations are perhaps aberrations. But the fact remains that too many films have a background of cruelty to the point of sadism, of violence, of promiscuity possibly veiled in the rags of divorce, or of near nudity in what are delightfully called "musicals". Often you find futility in plot and construction balanced by fatuity in the acting; sometimes you discover a slick vulgarity which offends good taste rather than morals. If the Box Office could get away with it, there might be the possibility for a vulgar and

commonplace mind, perhaps quite free from evil intentions, to have, through this "magnificent power", a thoroughly disproportionate effect upon the process of soul corruption of millions. And Box Office *can* get away with it unless the patrons or customers develop and exercise the critical faculty in effective ways.

Articulate reaction needed

As every secular priest knows, many exhausted workers and tired wives find their one relaxation in their regular visits to the local cinema. The programme doesn't matter to them. It is their night to go and they go "to be taken out of themselves". It seems hard to tell these people that they should rouse themselves to evaluate what they see, to break themselves of their regularity, to study the advance criticisms of the films they are to be shown, to have and consult their own files on the worthwhileness of this or that producer, whose work has up to then been futile, vulgar, insincere or demoralising. What are these poor people to do? Is it to be simply a case, if they be Catholic, of the priest being asked to tell them? Instructed Catholics should not be—I was going to say at the apron strings—dependent all the time and for everything on the priest. They should be able to sum up a situation and act accordingly. I think that regular patrons affronted by a particular film should "have the guts" to tell the management either verbally or by letter. If this should happen with even a few customers, the effect is certain. Box Office is barometric in its sensitivity. It knows that for everyone who registers a complaint there are many who share the resentment, but have not the energy or else forget to say what is on their mind. But it still remains on the mind, and Box Office does not like that. Even if the cinema be the modern version of a "tied house", showing only the firm's films, the customer's reactions are noted and passed higher up. You see, customers talk, and other people may be influenced against the goods and against the studio!

Dope Addicts—

It seems to me that the real education of a useful critical approach

must be insisted on, but not so much among the relaxed and bemused regular "twice-a-weekers", those whose condition I have described, I hope sympathetically. The most we can expect from them is an occasional "grouse" as above. For the most part they are going to be there from force of habit and because they want to escape from the rigour or the monotony of their daily lives. It would not matter to them if others succeed in improving the "dope" they seek. They would possibly not notice any improvement. With all the warmth, comfort, expectation and excitement of their cinema, mighty organ and the Dagenham Girl pipers thrown in, it would just be a case of "We can't improve the wrapper so we've improved the commodity".

Like the tiresome old man at the party, I have purposely thrown out the word "dope". Which reminds me of a sympathetic master at one of our Public Schools who used to ask the senior boys: "Seen any good dopies lately?" It became part of the conversational currency of the school to say "dopies" instead of "movies", "flicks" or "the cinema". I should imagine that with this prophylactic slang in mind and on lips few of those boys could grow up to confuse reality and mirage, life and the films. They would be inclined rather to seek out where the dope was, even in films they had enjoyed.

—or Critics

From this experience I agree with any who say that the chief hope of getting an informed critical approach to the film lies with capturing the minds of the young. It's their minds which have to be pitted against their senses. Turn their minds away from all this shoddy star business and film-fanning. They can be diverted into interest in the story, the technicalities of production, and what the actors make of their parts. Actors? Parts? Yes, they are only men and women acting a part, and how they do it is of more interest than their personalities. There is a quite flattering exhilaration in taking things to pieces, in solving or in thinking we are solving a problem. Is there anything false in this film? What is cheap about it? What of playing down to the unworthy

is in it? Do people (foreigners, Catholics, rich people, artists, nuns, bus drivers) really behave in this way or would they in such circumstances? Do the girls really admire bounders and smart-alecks like this talkative, easy-smiling, taking-it-all-for-granted hero? And so on. Why, in the right hands, with a little steering, the Youth Club or even the School Film Society could find film criticism enthralling as a game. Unformed as their minds are, they can at least grasp that the film may have all the answers except when you have all the questions. And with a parallel growth of their religion and their life they should be able to detect not only what is in bad taste and inartistic, but also what is false and bad. In all this strange combination of seeking out the good and having quick reactions to the bad, the Catholic Film Institute is deliberately carrying out the recommendations of Pius XI, and it aims at making us film conscious instead of unconscious patients from whom the film industry can get no reactions.

I cannot imagine a critical film-goer becoming overpowered by star-worship. I remember visiting a former housemaid who was intent on leaving her husband because he was not Clark Gable—and not in the sense that he “was no Clark Gable”, but literally. The poor girl had really become infatuated with the lighted shadow of a man playing a part which had arisen in the imagination of another man no one knew, who had written the part. As a priest I cannot help finding something unhealthy in the glamour and advertising and the bobbysoxing. It's all too much strumming on the one theme, and that theme best left alone.

“Catch me the little foxes”

To sum up, I think settled-in, regular relaxation-film-goers must at least be encouraged to utter their grumbles in the right quarter. It seems we can ask no more from them. They are practically dope-addicts by now. (But I am interested to hear that Father J. A. V. Burke has had several successful lectures to the Catholic Parents' Association on film appreciation and criticism. Whether he is optimistic or I pessimistic, I really don't know.) I see a wide field well open for training

the critical instinct in the young, for teaching them the economy of discrimination. After all, we can see only so many films in our one life, and a bad or silly one is a waste of opportunity and a waste of the function of enjoyment. There are so many good films and there could be so many more if it was clear that we had no time for the bad or even for the shoddy.

Before I conclude I must say how very much impressed I was by the previous articles in this series. Major A. McLoughlin, writing on Parents and the Cinema, and Margaret Anderson, dealing with the Teacher and the Cinema, both stress the child angle in this matter. Both point to someone's responsibility for the child's soul inhabiting that little body there in the cinema. Major McLoughlin pins the responsibility firmly where it belongs, on the parents. Margaret Anderson steps into the breach, and breach of responsibility there is, and says: “If parents are not going to apply sanctions (and to many it is a convenience that children are out of the way, no matter what they are seeing), then it is for teachers to tackle the trouble”. She gives interesting examples of the fostering of film appreciation in schools.

This particular priest looking at the Cinema agrees with the forward play of Major McLoughlin and admires unreservedly the half back line of Margaret Anderson and her colleagues.

So we are back to film appreciation and criticism again. To be forearmed is the thing, forearmed and trained. In a fog the luminous studs on the highway keep you on the road, unless you *want* to wander off into a ditch. And that you can do in broad daylight. You *can* go to the devil without the cinema. But if you like an occasional “flick” add your weight to the Catholic Film Institute, and you too can train your sight to the studs in the road. But you probably do belong.

New Catholic Film

It is not too soon to ask your cinema manager to book *Heaven and Earth* (Sorcier du Ciel), the story of St. John Baptist Vianney, which is having its London Premiere this month. Remember it was your insistence which brought *Monsieur Vincent* to your local cinema.

GALA MONTH

TWO FIRST-CLASS FILM OCCASIONS

The month of October is to be a special one from the point of view of the Catholic Film Institute. Two Film Premieres in one month is quite a record.

One will be a Charity Premiere for the benefit of the Y.C.W. The other will be the long-awaited premiere of *Pilgrimage to Fatima*.

The film of the life of the Curé d'Ars which was shown privately to the General Council of the International Catholic Film Office last year in London is now to be generally released throughout England. Under the English title, *Heaven and Earth*, it will begin its career at the New Gallery Cinema, London, on October 5th. Through the courtesy of Films de France and the J. A. Rank Organisation the proceeds of the Premiere will be devoted to the work of the Young Christian Workers.

A Premiere Committee under the Chairmanship of the Marchioness of Lothian, has been busy organising the details connected with the selling of tickets. Georges Rollin, who plays the part of St. John Baptist Vianney, is coming from France to be present at the Premiere, which will be presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Griffin.

Tickets are available, priced £3 3s. 0d., £2 2s. 0d., £1 1s. 0d. and 10s. 6d., and may be obtained from the Y.C.W., 106 Clapham Road, S.W.9, or members of the Committee.

We hope that all members of the C.F.I. will support this Premiere, both for the sake of the Young Christian Workers, for whose benefit it is being held, but also because the Premiere itself is a recognition of our work and position and its success will mean other similar occasions later on.

* * * *

Pilgrimage to Fatima

It is hoped that this Premiere will take place on October 22nd, but, owing to restrictions imposed by the L.C.C. on Sunday performances, it has not yet (as we go to press) been possible to secure a theatre. The Premiere will be under the patronage of His Grace the Apostolic Delegate. Full details will be published in the Catholic Press.

The film will also be shown at the Hammer Theatre, Wardour Street, most evenings, at 8 p.m. during the following weeks. For details see Catholic Press.

There will also be a Special Gala performance of *Pilgrimage to Fatima* at the Odeon Cinema, Forest Gate, on Sunday, October 22nd, at which His Lordship Bishop Beck will preside.

Other special showings will take place at various cinemas throughout the provinces during the course of the winter and spring; details will be published in due course.

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FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

THE MILKMAN

Starring: Donald O'Connor and Jimmy Durante. **Director:** Charles T. Barton. **Producer:** Ted Richmond. A Universal-International Picture. G.F.D. Release. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

A man in his thirties, or in middle age or beyond, may well have forgotten his childish ambitions to become an engine driver, a fireman, a cowboy, a pirate or a highwayman. Perhaps, after all, he has turned out to be a stock broker, or a dentist, a baker, a bank clerk or a pawn-broker. How oddly are youthful ambitions shattered, and how rarely, if ever, are they attained! However, in this film we find a boy's ambition attained in adult life. A queer and rare ambition you may say—to be a milkman. But see for yourself if it really is so rare. Go down any back street of any city or suburb and you will find the milkman is the centre of a mob of young admirers. Who is it that dispenses to small boys free rides in a van? The milkman. Who confers upon an aspiring seven-year-old the dignity of a job with wages on Saturday mornings and on holidays? The milkman. Who disperses gaiety each morn along the dullest of streets? The milkman, with a smile, a whistle and a song, to the accompaniment of the music of jangling bottles.

You can well imagine, then, that in the States, where everything is so very super-doooper, the job of milkman is modernised, mechanised and glamourised. Dressed in hospital white, equipped with an all-in electric van, a milkman's "jarb" is worth two of any engine driver's. But when the milkman is none other than Jimmy Durante, what boy could fail to make a hero of him? Nor can we marvel that Donald O'Connor, even though his father is boss of a huge rival milk

syndicate, determines that nothing will stand in the way of achieving his ambition to be a milkman, just like Jimmy. And does he do it? Yessir, with a song and a dance.

The story may be feeble stuff and the script a trifle thin, but these two great entertainers make the most of their chances and give a good time to all.

G.

MISTER 880

Starring: Burt Lancaster, Dorothy McGuire, Edmund Gwenn, with Millard Mitchell. **Producer:** Julian Blaustein. **Director:** Edmund Goulding. **Distributors:** 20th Century - Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

I call this an enjoyable film. The prologue suggested one of those well documented studies in criminology, but that must have been a sly skit. The picture is not a detective thriller either, though it is about an endearing old man (Edmund Gwenn, of course) who goes in for a bit of rare but persistent counterfeiting on a small scale and baffles the Secret Service. It is a "comedy-drama" which reveals a considerable amount of unobtrusive intelligence, observation and humour. The ethics too are rather neatly adjusted.

Note the ingenuity of an incident outside a shop, seen but not heard through the shop window.

The cinema industry cannot be expected to confine itself to masterpieces. But it would do well to supplement them with films of this sort rather than with pretentious and expensive rubbish.

If you want to spend a spare hour and a half pleasantly, you might do very much worse than go to see *Mister 880*.

Q.



Olivia de Havilland in "The Heiress"

THE HEIRESS

Starring: Olivia de Havilland, Montgomery Clift, Ralph Richardson, with Miriam Hopkins, Mona Freeman, Vanessa Brown, Selena Royle. **Producer and Director:** William Wyler. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 115 minutes.

The publicity supplied to me states that this picture won five Academy Awards, but does not specify them. So I will make my own.

First an Award to Paramount for venturing beyond the usual range to give us a story of a hundred years ago and never provoking a titter with the laboriously expressed admiration of a verbose courtship. Secondly one to Olivia de Havilland for her study of the shy, uninteresting heiress to whom love brings radiance and suffering gives poise. And a third to whoever is responsible for leaving us in uncertainty for some time as to whether her suitor is a disinterested lover or a mere fortune hunter, instead of "planting" the truth in the minds of the audience before it is realised by the girl.

It is not necessary to suppose, as the synopsis does, that the unusual ending has revenge as its motive. Though love can survive disillusion, prudence



Ralph Richardson and Olivia de Havilland in "The Heiress"

may yet effectively dissuade from marriage.

The infrequent change of scene is a reminder that the film is based on a stage play.

I am always interested to see the romantic stars of the past when they emerge in middle aged parts after a long disappearance. And here is Miriam Hopkins as aunt and widow.

Q.

ROGUES OF SHERWOOD FOREST

Starring: John Derek, Diana Lynn, with George Macready, Alan Hale. **Producer:** Fred M. Packard. **Director:** Gordon Douglas. **Technicolor.** **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes.

The most shattering thing about this film is the disavowal contained in the handout synopsis. I give it word for word: "*The characters and incidents portrayed and the names used herein are fictitious and any similarity to the names, character or history of any person is entirely accidental and unintentional.*"

Was it a joke or a serious attempt to disarm angry criticism? I still can't decide. The names concerned happen to be those of King John, Stephen Langton and certain of the English myth about Robin Hood's merry men, while the incident of Magna Carta comes about through the various goings on.

Much against the grain I found some degree of interest in the fancy dress acrobatics of a son manufactured for Robin Hood. John Derek was the player. And the galloping horses were superb.

Incidentally I've never seen so many men with arrows sticking out of them.

I hesitate to give even a "B" to the film because of the occasional whiff of sadism amongst all the gallant encounters. Otherwise it is colourful and adventurous enough.

X.

CAGED

Starring: Eleanor Parker, Agnes Moorhead, Ellen Corby, Hope Emerson, Betty Garde, Jan Sterling.
Producer: Jerry Wald. **Director:** John Cromwell. A Warner Brothers Picture. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A.

The American urge for self accusation continues to develop. It will be a sad day for that great country when film-goers begin to judge the American way of life by what is depicted on the screen. Granted that this is a fair representation of American ways in American prisons, then here is all the material required for the perfect retort to all this talk about liberty and democracy. It appears to be at root a political problem which the film indicates without doing more than reveal the running sore which the problem has created. The spectacle of human moral and physical decay is never entertaining and seldom edifying. To the average film-goer, there will be horror in plenty and no entertainment whatever. The question remains whether this dramatisation of sheer misery has any value and is fit material for the screen. The problems indicated are sociological and psychological, requiring for their solution cold objective treatment. That sort of treatment is scarcely possible when the emotions have been harassed by this well-made film. It could be said that emotional disturbance is necessary to move the intellect and will into appropriate action. Even if that is true there must be selection of those to whom the appeal is to be made. General release is an appeal to a far flung audience little likely to offer a constructive opinion and most unlikely to benefit in any way from the frustration, cruelty and sadism depicted here.

Marie Allen (Eleanor Parker) enters an American State Prison as a fairly normal type who is not very sure why she has arrived there at all. The Superintendent (Agnes Moorhead) is humane, progressive and kindly, but entirely frustrated in her work by politics without and corruption within. All the acting is of a high standard, especially that of the matron, Hope Emerson. The sensitive Marie Allen is most convincing as we watch the system, helped by the terrible flotsam and jetsam of our modern society, kill her moral sense and turn her into a hard, shiny, brassy woman of the underworld. There is one superb piece of photography and drama when the imprisoned women release all their pent up affections on a tiny kitten in the dead of night, turning into raging furies when the object of their love is removed by authority. No light touch appears anywhere in the film so that it is a relief to step out into God's warm sunshine again. I shudder to think what it would be like to walk out from it into the cold dark fog of a north-country winter night. I think I would ask for my money back — at least the entertainment tax.

J. C.

THE WHITE TOWER

Starring: Glenn Ford, Valli, Claude Rains, Oscar Homolka, with Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Lloyd Bridges, June Clayworth, Lotte Stein.
Producer: Sid Rogell. **Director:** Ted Tetzlaff. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio. In technicolor, *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 98 minutes.

Why do people risk their lives to climb mountains? The question is often asked and for a moment I thought this picture was going to thrash the matter out. But somebody obviously remembered that the purpose of a film is entertainment and everything got bogged down again.

A party sets out to climb the White Tower, an unscaled mountain in Switzerland near "Kanderstatt" (which is not Andermatt). Besides the guide there is a cosmopolitan lovely, an American airman, an alcoholic French

writer, an elderly English scientist and an aggressive German.

The highest peak I have actually climbed is Helvellyn (3,111 feet). In Switzerland I adhere strictly to the rack and pinion school of mountaineering. And so I am not in a position to judge how well the atmosphere of ropes and ice axes is conveyed. But one thing definitely provoked my scepticism; the guide had no idea how much he was going to be paid.

What interests me most at the top of Pilatus or the Rigi is the view, and I wish we could have seen a bit more from the White Tower. But nobody seemed to care about scenery. Perhaps the blizzard stopped all that. After seeing that blizzard I am more than ever determined to stay content with Helvellyn. I fear that I shall never cry "Excelsior!" except to a taxi driver in Rome, if someone offers to pay my expenses at that hotel.

I am told that in the novel (by James Ramsey Ullman) there was more symbolism. But even in the film symbolism keeps poking out a coy but unmistakable head. Especially at the end, surely. The girl had to decide between the summit and the American. And she chose the American. That is the trouble in a symbolic nutshell.

Q.

SADDLE-TRAMP

Starring: Joel McCrea and Wanda Hendrix, with John Russell, John McIntyre and Jeannette Nolan. A Universal-International Picture.
Director: Hugo Fregonese.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 76 minutes.

Why do producers so unblushingly duplicate film stories? Two "rocket-ship" stories within a fortnight of each other, and now *Saddle-Tramp*, the story of a ne'er-do-well who adopts a family of orphans and settles down, within a month of *Father is a Bachelor*, the story of a ne'er-do-well who adopts a family of orphans and settles down. The difference is that one is in black and white and has lots of riding and fighting, whereas *Saddle-Tramp* is in technicolor and has lots of riding and fighting!

I liked Joel McCrea as the roving cowhand with a neat little theme song and an urge to get to California. I wish he did not use the expression "creeping creepers" quite so often. It is the corruption of a name which means very much to Christians. Perhaps he and the many people who will see this film have not appreciated that fact, but there it is.

Also, I wish they did not have to introduce so many quick-fire cross cuts of bleeding faces when the hero and villain have their inevitable fight to the death. I know it is now the fashion and that we have been through a commando-fought war, but still, there is such a thing as sadism and young people can be given an unhealthy excitement by such things, to say nothing of the sensitive youngsters to whom such things are nauseating.

Otherwise, a pleasant if unpretentious film which, but for the points I have mentioned, could have increased the pitifully small number of films that can be called family entertainment.

V.

CARGO TO CAPETOWN

Starring: Broderick Crawford, Ellen Drew, John Ireland. **Producer:** Lionel Houser. **Director:** Earl McEvoy. **Distributors:** Columbia Picture Corporation Limited.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 84 minutes.

It is quite certain that this is a picture which Dr. Edith Summerskill would hesitate to recommend to the teaching profession. There is more than enough of good hard slugging in it—possibly just enough to give the doctor some ammunition for her next hint to mothers and teachers of the country. Of course we like our sailors tough, but a suggestion that the first faint glimmer of pure intellect is not entirely beyond their scope would increase our admiration for them. The main difficulty about the film is that most people will feel that they have seen it before. Steve Conway (John Ireland) has to get his ship through a very bad storm and he knows quite well that her engines are not what they were. To complicate matters, he has shanghaied

his crew and there is a girl aboard. The girl loves Steve's friend and chief engineer, Johnny Phelan (Broderick Crawford), who never manages to convince us that he is not the better match of the two. Why she eventually swings round to fancy Steve is just another of those unpredictable things about women and romance. Anyway there is the storm, the crew and the very emotional complication. The acting is very good, the photography fairly good, the plot so well known that the audience has to wait until the celluloid catches up with it.

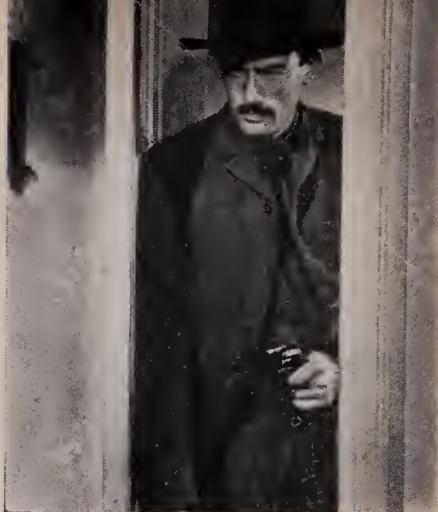
J. C.

THE GUNFIGHTER

Starring: Gregory Peck, Helen Westcott, Millard Mitchell, Jean Parker. **Producer:** Nunnally Johnson. **Director:** Henry King. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

This is the film that will banish for ever the idea that morality cannot be exciting. It has not got a single ingredient that Zane Grey has not given the world long ago, but it is first class entertainment. Jimmie Ringo (Gregory Peck) is a good-bad man in the grand old W. S. Hart tradition whose past persists in complicating his present. He has good reasons for riding into the rather up-stage town of Cayenne, but such is his fame for speed on the draw that his very presence is enough to outrage the ladies, provoke the embryo Ringos to risky insolence and disrupt the whole educational system of the place. Millard Mitchell makes a magnificent Sheriff and Jimmie's presence is obviously the greatest headache he has ever known.

As the film proceeds, we gather that Sheriff Mark Strett has had quite a few headaches in his day and not all of them on the right side of the law. As the terrible morning wears on he looks more and more like a worried U.N. delegate watching Mr. Malik than the very tough customer he shows himself to be at the end. There is a great deal of sharp action and sustained tension in a restricted space, and although knowledge of current Hollywood policy



Gregory Peck as Ringo in "The Gunfighter"

makes it clear that Ringo cannot be allowed to get away with anything, Gregory Peck and Millard Mitchell act so well that interest does not flag till the very end. The nature of the plot excludes the lovely photography that Westerns normally give, but the story is so good and so well acted that nobody will mind. The ending appears as an unnecessary tailpiece, although we cannot quarrel with the sentiment it expresses.

J. C.

TARZAN AND THE SLAVE GIRL

Starring: Lex Barker, Vanessa Brown, Robert Alda, Denise Darcel. **Producer:** Sol Lesser. **Director:** Lee Sholem. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 74 minutes.

Tarzan, with the strength of a gorilla and the instincts of a gentleman, continues his adventures. He rescues girls taken captive by a mysterious tribe. They receive instead inoculation against a mysterious disease.

Lex Barker makes a more convincing Tarzan than many of his predecessors in this rôle. I thought, however, that some of the scenes were more brutal than they need have been, and for this reason would hesitate to recommend the film for children.

T.



Debra Paget, Jeff Chandler and James Stewart
in "Broken Arrow"

BROKEN ARROW

Starring: James Stewart, Jeff Chandler
and Debra Paget. **Producer:**
Julian Blaustein. **Director:** Delmer
Daves. **Distributors:** 20th
Century - Fox. **Certificate:** U.
Category: B. **Running time:** 80
minutes.

This film tells a story, and tells it simply and directly, with occasional touches of humour, and in beautiful scenery and colour which leaves nothing to be desired. The story is interesting, and never once do we lose the thread of it, as we usually do in Westerns, where the pace is too

furious and everyone shoots everyone else several times over—or so it seems. Here we are held to the story, and though things get exciting enough, they never get out of control and leave us in bewilderment. A white man (James Stewart) attempts to bring peace between his people and the powerful Red Indian tribe headed by Chief Cochise (Jeff Chandler). Once there is a footing of goodwill, peace becomes a possibility but, owing to bad men in both camps, only after much perseverance and overcoming many obstacles. Peace can be more difficult than war.

The issues become somewhat complicated when James Stewart falls in love with the most beautiful girl of the tribe (Debra Paget) and then, according to a quite beautiful Red Indian rite, marries her. But the colour question is not allowed to offend pious American eyes, and the poor girl is killed in her husband's arms before the problem becomes too acute.

This is the very thing schoolboys love to read, and just the thing for the screen. Grown-ups may find it a trifle naïve in parts, the dialogue stilted here and there, and English audiences (knowing no better) may even condemn the uncultured American accents of the "civilised" white man and the perfect dulcet tones of the English spoken by the unlettered Red Indians as being quite unreal. On the other hand, those in the know may say that in this, at least, the film is not too far from reality.

G.

COLT .45

Starring: Randolph Scott and Ruth Roman. **Director:** Edward L. Marin. A Warner Brothers Production. In technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C.

This thorough-going Indian and cowboy film will be appreciated by all children under 90 and by families of all sizes who like this sort of thing. It is, however, very much like any other such film; the pace is fast and furious, the gun play terrific, the scenery delightful and, mercifully, for once, love interest is lacking.

G.



Jeff Chandler and James Stewart in
"Broken Arrow"



Hair Styles in Cathay, 1266 A.D.
Tyrone Power and Cecile Aubrey in
"The Black Rose"

THE BLACK ROSE

Starring: Tyrone Power, Orson Welles, Cecile Aubrey and Jack Hawkins, with Michael Rennie, Finlay Currie, Herbert Lom and Mary Clare. A 20th Century-Fox Film.
Director: Henry Hathaway.
Certificate: U. **Category:** A.
Running time: 121 minutes.

This film is distinguished by beautiful scenery and photography (Jack Cardiff), interesting music (Richard "Warsaw Concerto" Addinsell) and an engaging little French actress (Cecile Aubrey) last seen (in Venice) in the beastly Clouzot film *Manon*.

For the rest, it is another of the Olde Englishe essays which frozen sterling has induced American producers to make in English studios. *The Black Rose* begins with scenes in and around Warwick Castle, c. A.D. 1266, and introduces us to a democratically-minded King Edward (the third of that name presumably, though the

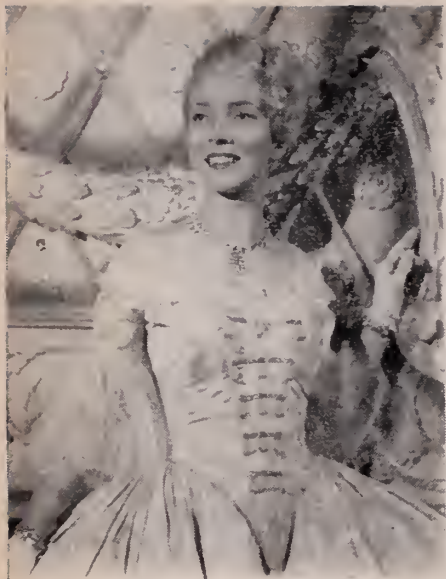
credits are discreetly silent) who pleads for the life of Walter of Gurnie (Tyrone Power), a surly Saxon with an American accent and a hatred for Normans. In the twinkling of an eye, after a scientific pep talk from Friar Roger Bacon (admirably suggested by Henry Oscar) the scene changes to Antioch where Walter and his buddy, Tristram the Bowman (Jack Hawkins), who is so quick on the draw that he can split another man's arrow at 200 yards, enter the service of Bayan (Orson Welles), a military leader carrying spoils to Khubla Khan.

Among the girls being carried to decorate the Khan's harem is Maryam (Cecile Aubrey), known as the Black Rose because she has blonde hair (dark at the roots) and speaks with a French accent, being the daughter of a Crusader and an infidel woman. She wants to go to England because she believes in miracles and thinks all Englishmen are as beautiful as Tyrone Power.

Tristram's prowess with the bow gives Bayan ideas about conquering the world with English yew, until he is side-tracked into contemplating blowing up Rome with gunpowder. They all have lots of fun and games, especially Walter, who is made to walk a rope on either side of which is a forest of gleaming and very sharp swords as well as a lot of nice men with spears ready to turn him into mincemeat if he so much as wanders from the straight and narrow way. Eventually Tristram is killed and Walter comes back to England with news of explosives, printing presses and directional compasses. Bayan, to prove that he, too, knows something about the Old School Tie, sends Maryam to England and Walter, where they both settle down to produce Englishmen who will speak like "B.B.C.-men."

The technicoloring is impressive. The acting is not. I was surprised that Friar Bacon, being the guest of Finlay Currie and Tyrone Power—both, I am told, Catholics—did not think of saying "Grace Before Meals", when they sat down to dinner in Warwick Castle, c. A.D. 1266!

The horrid impaling scenes make this film, in my opinion, unsuitable for youngsters.



Valentina Cortesa as Tarakanova in
"Shadow of the Eagle"

SHADOW OF THE EAGLE

Starring: Richard Greene and Valentina Cortesa, with Greta Gynt, Binnie Barnes, Charles Goldner, Hugh French and Walter Rilla. **Producer:** Anthony Havelock Allan. **Director:** Sidney Salkow. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 92 minutes.

As the screen fades we read: "A Valiant Film. The End." I fear that this has more significance than the producers intended. Such an unconvincing bit of swashbuckling cloak-and-daggery has not come my way for a long time. Richard Greene, unimpeded by the most enveloping cloaks, despatches his adversaries by every conceivable and inconceivable method of cut and thrust known to swordplay. When distance makes contact difficult, he aims his sword through the heart of his foe with an unerring skill which would make the "Elephant and Castle" Darts Champion green(e) with envy! Then, though

the scene is set in eighteenth century Venice, he is not above a little commando stuff now and then, with a few sadistic coshings and bashings to complete the modern note. Further, he has a special line in pocket explosives which, when swords and fists are no longer available, enables him to bring the castle walls tumbling as he rides to safety and the sunset with his lady in his arms.

There is, of course, a public for this sort of thing and this time they will get their money's worth. Apart from the absurdity of the script and the banality of the dialogue, the photoplay is really superb. Largely taken on location in Venice, here is an excellent example of the use of masking and screening devices as applied to actual locations, which produce some convincing allusions of antiquity. The lighting, too, is worthy of a better cause. Great use is made of light and shadow in passages and under bridges, and great staircases and arresting vistas across the Piazza San Marco and the canal lend this film a distinction to which it is otherwise not entitled.

The story is the oft-screened one of the Empress Catherine of Russia's attempt to destroy the pretender to her throne. The history is phoney, but the names are authentic.

Binnie Barnes looks the part of the Empress but does not act it. Valentina Cortesa (there seems to be some indecision as to how her name should be spelt) acts the part of the Pretender but is certainly too charming and beautiful to look it. Richard Greene is a dashing Count Orloff (did I say dashing?). Charles Goldner looks and acts selfconsciously as "the cruel and ambitious police chief", General Korsakov. And well he might, for he is a good actor.

We are treated to a Valiant Film speciality in liturgy in the shape of a "five-o'clock Mass" which consists, as far as one can see, in a secret choir singing magnificently in a deserted basilica, what time the fair princess reads her prayer-book, alone, in front of the High Altar!

A vulgar exercise in the art of osculation renders this film distasteful where it might only have been puerile. This and the brutality of some scenes makes it unsuitable for youngsters.

V.

DESTINATION MOON

Starring: John Archer, Warner Anderson, Tom Powers, Dick Wasson and Erin O'Brien Moore.

Producer: George Pal. **Director:** Irving Pichel. An Eagle-Lion Film. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

While watching this film with its apparently expert juggling with figures and physical laws, I was reminded of the lecture by an eminent physicist who was talking about the age of the world and when it would come to an end. At question time a Cockney got up and asked: "Did you say 30,000,000 years or 3,000,000 years?" "I said 30,000,000 years," replied the eminent physicist. "Coo!" said the Cockney, "you give me a fright! I fought you said 3,000,000!"

I must admit that in spite of the fact that my superior self was airily dismissing the figures and facts so convincingly thrown off by the screen scientists when assembling their space-ship, I felt a considerable rising (or sinking?) of the interior when one of them fell off the projectile and floated about in space! The mere thought of such interplanetary journeyings gives me vertigo.

This is, of course, a big tribute to the technicians responsible for this film-story of a group of American scientists who attempt to send a space-ship to the moon. Whatever the merits of the film as intelligent art, film appreciation and what have you, it cannot be denied that here is an extremely well-made piece of pseudo-scientific film fantasy which will delight all readers of H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs and the modern representatives of the scientific-fiction school.

Though the obvious crack comes to mind when one reads that the screen-play is by a gentleman with the name of Rip Van Ronkel, there is nothing sleepy or intrinsically impossible about the expedition here described. Indeed, the film succeeds, by means of an ingenious cartoon sequence, in explaining to one person at least, far more than he previously understood about the force of gravity.

Inevitably there are moments in such a film as this when one's sense of the



Four Men on the Moon
(A scene from "Destination Moon")

absurd is given plenty of scope. One such is when a member of the crew, now standing on the surface of the moon, solemnly says: "In the name of God and on behalf of the U.S.A. I claim this territory for the benefit of mankind!" I hope I am not guilty of undue levity in finding this rather grotesque.

Technicolor gives this film a great advantage over its rival rocketship story. Incidentally, it is very much better acted and far more credible. I would place it in Category C were I not uncertain as to how children will react to the somewhat terrifying implications of being shot off into space.

V.

UNION STATION

Starring: William Holden, Nancy Olson, Barry Fitzgerald, with Lyle Battger, Jan Sterling.

Producer: Jules Schermer.

Director: Rudy Mate. **Distrib-**

utors: Paramount. **Certificate:**

A. **Category:** B. **Running time:**

81 minutes.

Union Station has its own staff of detectives. And these professionals were ably assisted by an amateur, Joyce Willecombe, when her boss's daughter was kidnapped. Perhaps I am stupid, but it was a long time

before I realised Joyce's connection with the family. I prefer to have the characters sorted out more clearly. The kidnapped girl, being blind as well, should have elicited sympathy, but alienates it by whining too much. To those who have seen *The Third Man*, another underground criminal hunt can hardly fail to be something of an anti-climax.

Barry Fitzgerald plays a comparatively small part of the type he has made his own and in which he incidentally stands up for the helping power of prayer, and especially the Mass.

This film has earned considerable commendation in the press and may well be seen by those who have no objection to seeing a man trampled to death by cattle or to a certain cynicism regarding the methods employed by the police to extract information. If I were a member of a board examining the picture, I should vote for its graduation, but not with the highest honours.

Q.

The best of "The Miniver Story"

(Walter Pidgeon and Cathie O'Donnell as father and daughter)



THE MINIVER STORY

Starring: Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, John Hodiak, Leo Genn, with Cathie O'Donnell. **Producer:** Sidney Franklin. **Director:** H. C. Potter. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 104 minutes.

It really is a pity that so healthy a film as this should have such obvious faults. First, it is caught up in what seems to be a cycle of "only six months to live" stories, and people going to the cinema may not care to have their emotions harrowed all that much. Again, the transatlantic influences on this British Film Quota offering strike a false note in the picture of English village life. It may be regrettable, but it is none the less true that, while comfortable upper middle class people have a proper respect for their grocer, their opportunities for social intercourse on really easy terms are few. Even good, affectionate and sensible parents like the Minivers would not positively promote a marriage between their daughter and the quite charming and officered grocer's son. At least not without a minor heroism. And in that case we should have witnessed the overcoming of the barrier of their prejudices. I am sorry to say it, but any account of village life in England lacks authenticity if it ignores this fact. And another thing. This General Brunswick that the Miniver girl dotes on has none of the marks of a senior British officer. And I don't refer to his passion for music and painting, but to his manners. Even Commando training fails to explain his striding about banging with a ruler at his first meeting with a lady. Nor does it explain his shouting and raving at her and his general lunatic behaviour.

Apart from these strictures, the only fault I can find in the film is a certain slowness.

However, it is good to have a film which depicts and exalts strong and lasting conjugal love. The funny, shy little family conferences between husband and wife, their protective anxieties for their children, the tenderness, the fumbling implications of loyalty, the family jokes and the bluffing exaggerations which deceive

no one—all these hold up a polished mirror to family audiences.

Greer Garson gives her warm, sincere rendering of the wife, and Walter Pidgeon, Canadian accent and all, still acts in the English manner and with a sincerity equal to his partner's. Cathie O'Donnell depicts very prettily the hurt and pathos of calf love. Leo Genn, whom I suppose it would be wrong to blame personally, fills the part of the remarkable General Brunswick.

X.

Thumb-Nail Reviews

For various reasons the following films were not reviewed in FOCUS when they originally appeared. To complete our lists as far as possible, the following brief particulars are supplied.

THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR

Leading Players: Dean Stockwell, Robert Ryan. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B.

Anti-war propaganda story of boy whose hair turns green, so that he may attract attention when preaching his doctrine. Inconclusive but sincere.

NEVER FEAR

Leading Players: Sally Forrest and Keefe Braselle. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B.

Girl dancer contracts infantile paralysis. Despairs of cure, but is encouraged to fight by devoted husband. Intended to reassure general public with regard to polio outbreak.

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Leading Players: Clifton Webb, Jeanne Crain, Myrna Loy. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A.

Comedy of eccentric father of large family. Basically sound, marred by occasional questionable dialogue.

Some Recent Documentaries

ROME OF THE PILGRIMS

A Catholic Film Institute Production in Kodachrome. **Distributors:** Catholic Film Institute. **Running time:** 20 minutes.

Every year, for the past four hundred years, there takes place on the third Sunday after Easter the Pilgrimage of the Seven Churches. *Rome of the Pilgrims*, produced by Arthur Leslie for the Catholic Film Institute, has for its theme the story of this pilgrimage, and in following the pilgrims, some of the story of Rome. From the wide range of material shown it is evident that the producer has exercised considerable care and thought in planning this film. The diversity of shots include, among the many churches, the magnificent basilicas of St. John Lateran, Sante Croce, Santa Susanna, Cardinal Hinsley's titular church, and of course St. Peter's itself. We see the English and the Scots colleges, students of the German college in their long scarlet robes, the private gardens of the Vatican, the Apostolic Palace, and the lovely Piazza Di Spagna and San Silvestro. There is an atmosphere of restraint and dignity throughout—and just occasionally of humour, as in the shot of the overloaded bus with apparently as many passengers attached to the outside as in—kept there presumably by that special force of gravity peculiar to the Roman omnibus!

From a technical point of view the film is unfortunately marred by a lack of colour balance and smoothness in camera operation, while in the copy reviewed, the otherwise excellent commentary was almost inaudible. In spite of these defects, however, the film remains one of real interest and value to all Catholics, and particularly to those who have not had the opportunity of visiting the Eternal City. J. A.

FOCUS INDEX

A complete index of FOCUS: A Film Review, Vols. I and II, is now available. Copies may be obtained from the Manager, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7, on receipt of stamps to the value of 1½d.

THIS IS BRITAIN—HEALTH

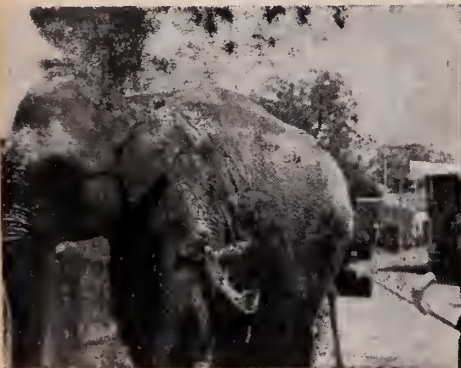
Running time: 9 minutes. A Crown Film Unit Production. Made by the C.O.I. for the Board of Trade.

I am not going to waste words on this latest cine-magazine production by the Crown Film Unit for the Board of Trade. It is excellent, and that is all there needs to be said about it, except, if you have a chance to see it, do so. Three items are shown, all concerned with health. The first is about the Harvard Hospital near Salisbury where volunteers go to act as guinea pigs for research into the common cold. The second shows the Ministry of Pensions artificial limb-fitting and welfare centre at Roehampton. And finally there is a short, interesting sequence on how hypodermic needles are made.

J. A.

One Use for Detergents

(From "The Magic Touch", reviewed in September FOCUS, page 277)



THE NEW COUNCILLOR

Running time: 20 minutes. A Crown Film Unit Production. Made by the C.O.I. for the Ministry of Health.

As the title itself indicates, this film is intended to give an insight into the work and responsibility of a borough councillor, and through him the functioning of local government generally. A sound idea, for far too many of us tend to think of the local council as a mysterious body which is always putting the rates up, but never by any chance bringing them down; and although we know there are such officials as Sanitary Inspectors, Medical Officers of Health, etc., their functions are often obscure.

The New Councillor opens well. We are shown shots of a local election in progress, candidates canvassing, the polling booth, secrecy of the ballot, and finally the newly elected candidate taking his seat at his first council meeting. So far, so good—but then what happens? We have four principal characters, the councillor, his mother, the Town Clerk and a reporter, each one of whom has a distressing tendency to address any one of the others as a public meeting, in whatever corridor of the town hall they happen to meet. There is a vast amount of what I can only describe as speechifying, through which it is true, some aspects of local government become apparent, but which is nevertheless tedious. However, even with its shortcomings, it is still a useful film, both for general audiences and senior schoolchildren. One final point—is it too much to expect of the Crown Film Unit that the sound track of the councillor's election speech should be in sync? J. A.

O.C.I.C. VENICE FESTIVAL AWARD

As we go to press we receive news of the films that have been crowned at the Venice Film Festival. A full account will appear in our next issue. For the moment we are glad to learn that, once again, a film with Pierre Fresnay in the leading rôle merits the award of the International Catholic Film Office. Jean Delannoy's *Dieu a Besoin Des Hommes* (God Has Need of Men) has caused some controversy on account of its thoughtful approach to a difficult subject, that of the need the people have of priests in order that

they may understand God's message to the full.

It is ironic that, as the result of some nervousness on the part of one or two Italian critics, the local Communists went into print with a welcome to *Dieu a Besoin Des Hommes* as a courageous "anti-clerical" film. It would have been worth a lot to see their faces when they read that this film had been crowned by the O.C.I.C. as a film "capable of contributing to the moral and spiritual betterment of humanity"!

The Art of the Actor—2

THE GENIUS OF BARRY FITZGERALD

By Gabriel Fallon



Barry Fitzgerald

"A Butler . . . R. Barry"

I remember returning from London in 1919, from a theatrical season which held such memorable performances as Robert Lorraine's *Cyranos de Bergerac*, Maurice Moscovitch's *Shylock*, William J. Rea's *Abraham Lincoln*, and J. M. Kerrigan's never-to-be-forgotten *Jimmy Caesar* in Mr. St. John Ervine's *John Ferguson*. The first group of Abbey Players had long since left the Abbey and by that time the finest actor of the second group, the great Fred O'Donovan, had followed them. Things seemed a little dead there. I went to see a performance of *The Good-Natured*

Man. It was quite a good performance as performances go. There was an excellent (though for the Abbey a rather "stagey") Mr. Croaker, played by an actor who was then a newcomer to the theatre—Mr. F. J. McCormick. But it was the playing of a very small part, indeed—the part of a butler with scarce half a dozen lines—that captured and held my attention. Here was a performance that was something more than "acting". Here was work that amongst much that was commonplace, little that was good, had, to my mind, a touch of genius in it. It was a performance that succeeded in putting Goldsmith's play completely out of my mind in order to plant a drunken butler there instead. I do not believe that I have ever seen a production which, from this point of view, showed such a lack of balance. The work of the playwright had vanished, only the actor's remained. Who was this man? My programme simply said: A Butler . . . R. Barry.

Some time afterwards I was in the position of being able to survey the Abbey from a new and, I suppose, a more privileged vantage point, that of the stage itself. I immediately made inquiries about my friend the butler. In my simplicity I had expected him to be the talk of the place. I had great difficulty in tracing him. Nobody seemed to think much of the fellow. "A small part man," they told me. "Will Shields is his name." Some weeks afterwards I met him. To my great surprise, I found that he was utterly indifferent to the glamour of the theatre. He was anything but "stage-struck". He was barely interested in the place. Were it not for the fact that his brother, Mr. Arthur Shields, was stage-manager at the Abbey, it is questionable if the theatre would have seen him at all. "Golf, now . . . that

was a great game . . . but the theatre!" He openly preferred the company of plus-four men to actors, and professed to be—and actually was—much more at home on the first tee than in the green room. And although his reputation on the stage was destined to outweigh by far his reputation on the putting-green, he responded far more readily to the grip of his golf-stick than to a stick of Leichner's grease-paint.

A Natural Comedian

And so for quite a long while a certain Mr. William Shields played small parts when called upon to do so. Frequently he was "not available", how frequently I well remember, since it fell to my lot, as a similar "general utility" actor, to take his place with far greater enthusiasm, if with less distinction. But there was one Abbey Director, at least, who was watching this man's work with a belief in his genius. The credit of taking Barry Fitzgerald from the ranks of the small-part actors and lifting him right up to leading rôles must be recorded to Lady Gregory. I do not think that he relished this advancement. It meant harder work, longer rehearsals, more time away from his beloved golf. Then, quite suddenly, reputation laid its hold upon him. Audiences rocked with laughter at his acting in *The Dragon*; packed houses roared at his portrayal in *The Lord Mayor*. His name quickly moved from lip to lip. "Have you seen Barry Fitzgerald in —?"

Some of his colleagues were, I think, a little surprised at this sudden access to fame, but, I give you my word for it, no member of the Abbey Company was as much surprised at it as Barry Fitzgerald himself. Then audiences demanded—with that quiet insistence with which audiences can so effectively make known their wishes in the theatre—to see their favourite in leading comic rôles. The fact that he could do some very effective serious work (his Captain Shotover in *Heartbreak House*, for instance) was very quickly forgotten. A roar of laughter greeted his appearance in every part. He liked to think that he could play tragedy. He had a cherished longing to play *Richard III*, and would, I feel, have played a splendid *Richard* to any audience unfamiliar with his gift for

comedy. But audiences that knew him would have none of it. I remember telling him that I believed I could make a sudden and substantial fortune for us both by the simple process of writing a series of dramatised adventures of Barry Fitzgerald as a Dublin tram-driver, a plumber, an insurance agent, a bread-van driver, a fire-brigade man, a deep-sea diver (and with a sudden flash of insight he suggested one himself)—an Abbey Actor!

Much of his genius lies in this, that it is Barry Fitzgerald and not the part that matters. The last time I saw him at the Abbey (and again from the front pit) was in Flecker's *Hassan*. He, who would have made an excellent Chief of Police in the play, was reduced to a *three line part*! There he lay, full in the Abbey moonlight, a snoozing beggar on the hard cobbles of Bagdad. The ascending curtain had hardly revealed him when the audience began to laugh. Every subsequent movement produced laughter still much louder than the last, until a seemingly indolent (but carefully considered) scratch evoked a roar that lasted a full minute. If the tinselled settings of the play had attempted to give us something of the "glamorous East" illusion, Barry Fitzgerald's scratch brought us to earth again and showed us the real Bagdad. There he was, and one—well, one just laughed at him! The audience hardly gave him an opportunity of saying his lines. They laughed and laughed. He stumbled over his words. They laughed again. He laughed himself (a risk which even the most reputable actor dare not take with them at times). But they only laughed at his laughter.

Elusive Genius

The critic who attempts to consider Barry Fitzgerald as anything other than a superb comic genius is bound to get into difficulties. Barry Fitzgerald cannot be explained. He is not a great actor in the sense that the early Abbey players were great actors. But if he is not as great, he is greater. It is futile to attempt (as some do) to compare his work with the splendid acting of the late F. J. McCormick. These things are simply not comparable. Although both men were working in the same medium, had

worked in the same theatre (very often in the same play), there was a whole wilderness of difference between them. F. J. McCormick created his characters, building with care and pains and infinite skill until the full artistic conception of his part was ready to be put on like a cloak, a cloak which frequently hid the physical appearance of McCormick himself. But Barry Fitzgerald is Barry Fitzgerald, and not all the grease paint in the world could paint away this uproarious personality. Were he to hide himself away from us, we would immediately demand that he become Barry Fitzgerald again. This is not to deny him the creative ability of the artist; far from it. It is simply that the creative process of Barry Fitzgerald is far more subtle. Artists like him always provide stumbling blocks to the critics in the theatre. They seem to break all the rules of the actor's art and to succeed only by breaking them. If that isn't genius of a very special kind—then what is?

Hollywood's Lack of Perception

When Barry Fitzgerald went to Hollywood it was whispered that he was a possible rival to Charles Chaplin. Whoever was responsible for that whisper had sensed Fitzgerald's real value. In actual fact his progress in films was slow. Despite excellent small-part work (as in John Ford's direction of *The Long Voyage Home*) it was not until he was seen as the elderly parish priest in *Going My Way* that his name was heard on the lips of the many. Incidentally, the following story may interest those who saw him in that part. During the shooting of the film, Barry had occasion to bless himself. Some of those present observed that the act was not carried out with that ease which is common to Catholics. There were whispers in every corner of the set. Sensing that something was wrong, Barry revealed to the utterly astonished studio that he was not a Catholic. Many of those who have seen his performance in the film have refused to believe it.

When he returned to Dublin in 1946 on his first holiday from Hollywood, *Going My Way* had just finished a long run. I had the rather frightening experience of being with him when he was mobbed in a restaurant. I think

he was frightened too. "Heavens above, this is terrible, Gaby," he said. "Of course, it's all so well intentioned. But why can't it be like the old days when you and I could slip in here for a snack and a little quiet conversation?" Last year, on a hush-hush flying visit, he took the precaution of wearing a cap and having a neatly-trimmed beard so that those who thought they saw me dining with Professor Joad were woefully mistaken.

Despite the many film rôles in which he has appeared since he left the Abbey Theatre, I don't think that Hollywood has yet found the real value of this ex-civil-servant, for he is one of that great primal fraternity in the theatre, a type that in such a deep real way represents the theatre itself. Like Chaplin, Barry Fitzgerald is a clown. He would be just as much at home in a circus, a music-hall, a harlequinade. He might very well have stepped right down to us from the *Commedia dell'Arte* itself. When he appeared on the London stage some of the more perceptive critics—particularly Ivor Brown and Charles Morgan—quickly sensed this fact. Some recently proffered contracts from French Studios have sensed it too. It may be too late now, for he is talking of retiring. All he wants, he tells me, is a little golf, an occasional part in the Abbey, and a quiet place in the country. Knowing something of his *laissez-faire* nature, his tendency to take what comes, I doubt if he will reach these things. One thing is certain. Comic geniuses are all too rare, and when the Abbey Theatre let Barry Fitzgerald go, it lost its hold on much laughter.

Change of Address

As we go to press we have to vacate our office at 20 Ovington Square, London, S.W.3. Pending the finding of new permanent accommodation, will readers please note that until further notice *all* correspondence for the Catholic Film Institute should be addressed to: The Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

THE C.F.I. SUMMER SCHOOL, 1950

The devastating roar of the American jet-planes from the nearby Manston Aerodrome which punctuated the lectures could not diminish the interest with which the students, drawn mainly from the North of England, followed the points made by a first-class team of speakers at the Convent of the Assumption, Pegwell Bay, Ramsgate.

We are particularly grateful to our lecturers who almost all came to Ramsgate in spite of difficulties of ill-health or urgent business elsewhere. We are conscious of the importance of this practical expression of sympathy with the aims and objects of the Catholic Film Institute.

We must also mention our feeling of obligation to the nuns, whose magnificent attention to our animal needs at all times was overwhelming. Food in plenty and beautifully prepared was available from breakfast till the end of the nightly film show. We are most grateful to Reverend Mother and the Community for all they did to make the Summer School the success it was.

The nightly programmes of films were projected with quiet efficiency by Mr. P. J. Fowler and Mr. Gajdowski. To both these gentlemen we owe a warm "thank you".

The writer takes advantage of this opportunity also to express the appreciation felt on all sides for the unremitting and generous service of our Assistant Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Margaret Moultrie. In a thousand little ways she makes herself indispensable to the smooth working of the C.F.I. and at Ramsgate, as elsewhere, her presence made all the difference.

The purpose of the Summer School was to outline the main heads under which the study and interest of the members might be most usefully focused. It is clearly impossible to do justice to any one subject in such a Course. It is hoped, therefore, that our students will feel stimulated to initiate similar courses in their various parts of the country. Anything the

Catholic Film Institute can do to assist such ventures will be gladly contributed.

An introduction in this sense was made by Father Burke at the opening of the Course. He also, at a later session, deputised for Clifford Evans, who was to have talked on the Contribution of the Actor. Father Burke spoke about Film Music and illustrated his remarks with extracts from film music on gramophone records.

The part of the scriptwriter was dealt with by Mr. Lyn Lockwood, who prefaced his remarks by saying that the cleavage of outlook between those who regard film-making as an industry and those to whom it is a profession, is based on financial considerations and renders the development of the cinema as an art almost impossible. Mr. Lockwood explained the part which the screenwright is called upon to play in the making of fictional films and showed that until there is a satisfactory recognition of the status of the screenwright there can be little hope of really outstanding work for the screen. Some of the best British films of the war and post-war periods were precisely those in which director and screenwriter were a team or, better, where the director and the screenwright were the same person. He suggested that critics should show a more alert attitude to the work of the scriptwriter.

Andrew Buchanan lectured on the development of Documentary film. He told the story of factual film from the days when the funeral of Queen Victoria was considered a masterpiece of reporting, till the present day. The newsreel has shown little perception of its power of penetration since then and the field has been won by the entertainment fictional film made in the studio under conditions of artificiality and glamour.

There is so much more the factual film can do to widen man's experience. Films dealing with social conditions, slum clearance, delinquency, food distribution and so on, not to mention films about other countries. Showman-

ship in the presentation of news came with the *March of Time* series in the late thirties. But here is danger. Propaganda and misrepresentation of the facts is not unknown to the makers of the factual film. Films are used to foster hatred where they should and could be used to encourage brotherly charity.

The non-theatrical movement by which 16mm. films were sent round the countryside to inaccessible places was the answer, Mr. Buchanan said, to those who would use the film for good purposes. Used by those who have international vision, the documentary film could be the greatest aid to religion and education and help to bring about international understanding.

The work of the art director, the man who designs the sets against which the fictional films of the studio are made, was outlined by Edward Carrick, the well-known art director and author. With the aid of a series of excellent slides, he traced the development of art design in films from the early influence of the stage tradition to the present day, when the most alert and imaginative designers help to mould the visual atmosphere of a film by a proper attention to movement within the film.

Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart lectured on the contribution of the critic. She insisted that though it was possible for a film critic to ply his profession without special academic qualifications, it is imperative for good film criticism that the positive qualifications of perception, literary ability, a sense of values and a firm belief in the power of the film to present such values, be possessed by anyone pretending to write about films.

Since, also, the critic sits, perforce, through much that defies this faith, he must also have sufficient hope to sustain him against the rare days when his faith is justified, as it was in varying degrees recently by *Panic in the Streets*, *Letter From an Unknown Woman* and *The Dividing Line*.

Miss Bruce Lockhart made a particular appeal to Catholic film critics to preserve their integrity in face of films that are called Catholic. Technically bad Catholic films, however worthy they may be in intention,

are more regrettable in their effect on the non-Catholic audience than a bad gangster or a bad Bob Hope film. The telling of a story about a saintly heroine is not enough to make it a good film if, technically, it is not sound.

The place and purpose of film strips was dealt with by Dr. Stephen Ackroyd, who made it clear that film strip has a special function of its own within the realm of educational aids. He also made the point by means of illustrations with a film strip projector, that strips need to be as carefully scripted as do motion pictures.

Mr. W. J. Igoe, the dramatic critic, in his lecture, the Catholic Approach, developed the point that many films which are glamorously attractive, fail as compared with the stage because they lack craftsmanship. He exemplified *Top Hat*, in which the legs of Fred Astaire, the principal reason for watching this film, were often invisible in his black trousers against the dark background. On the other hand, there was the rare moment in *Annie Get Your Gun*, where the scruffy and diminutive Annie is looking up into the face of the six-foot sharpshooter, when the camera really does put one into the place of the character in question.

Analysing, in particular, three films with a Catholic interest, Mr. Igoe insisted that *Brighton Rock* and *The Third Man*, as films, failed to transmit the sense of doctrine which Graham Greene brought to his writings. *Monsieur Vincent*, however, achieved the miracle of transmitting, through the exquisite artistry of Pierre Fresnay, the supernatural charity evoked by St. Vincent de Paul in the XVIIth century.

The programme of films which ended each day's lectures were intended as a survey of the possibilities of film from the point of view of the amateur, who is determined on professional standards in his use of film for religious purposes. The Ten Best Amateur Films of 1949, though unequal in quality and thematic material, demonstrated what can be done by individuals and groups who are prepared to study their medium and their instrument. *Four Steps in the Cloud* is an excellent example of the Italian method of using exterior locations with economic effect. A series of religious films included the C.F.I. *Crucifers to Walsingham* and

Ave Maria, a charming Italian film depicting a village procession to a shrine of Our Lady in Abruzzi. Abbot Upson's beautiful, silent, coloured film, *As Sure As God's in Gloucestershire*, aroused the greatest enthusiasm with its well-chosen sequences showing the life of the Benedictines at Prinknash Abbey. *The Atom and You*, the *Films For Humanity* lecture film

on the question of atomic power, demonstrated a further use of film as propaganda. The beautiful photography of *The Passionate Friends*, by David Lean, set a standard for imaginative and poetic camera-work even in professional commercial films.

It is hoped that some of the lectures given at the Summer School may be printed in FOCUS at a later date.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Hierarchy Centenary Congress

The Catholic Film Institute has been invited by the Committee of the Hierarchy Centenary Congress to produce a souvenir film of the Congress celebrations.

Monsieur Vincent

By the courtesy of C. V. Bargate, Esq., the Catholic Film Institute was enabled to show the famous French film *Monsieur Vincent* to the Little Sisters of the Poor at Portobello Road, London, on the occasion of a special gathering of the Sisters at the end of a Retreat. The film was much appreciated and the Sisters, whose work of charity is so similar to that initiated by St. Vincent de Paul, savoured to the full the implications of the film with its demand that supernatural charity impregnate all social and rescue work undertaken for the poor.

Dr. Andrew Buchanan

We are delighted to learn that the International Academy has awarded to Andrew Buchanan, the well-known Producer and Director of factual films, the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature in recognition of his work in writing and lecturing on films. Rarely has an academic honour been more richly deserved and we hasten to offer to Dr. Buchanan our warm congratulations. Readers of FOCUS will know by experience the characteristic clarity and lucidity which distinguishes his writings.

Film Competition

We have so far received few films for our Film Competition. It will be remembered that our purpose in announcing the Competition was to discover latent or unrecognised talent among the amateur cinematographers who are members of the C.F.I. or readers of FOCUS.

They must be aware by now of our hope to be able to form groups of students willing to study the technique of film-making and so provide the recruiting basis from which to develop our plan for an independent professionally competent production unit for religious films and films for humanity.

This year must have stimulated many possessors of cine-cameras to record their pilgrimage, holiday, or other interesting occasion. Do let us see what you have done. It will help us immensely.

There is a prize of £20 for the person whose film is judged the best, technically and imaginatively. A prize Plaque will be awarded to the winner and diplomas to the runners-up.

The work of the S.V.P., the C.P.E.A., the Y.C.W., etc., suggest many interesting subjects for amateur filmmakers.

C.F.I. Abroad

The Chairman of the C.F.I. (Very Rev. Hilary Carpenter, O.P.) and the Editor of FOCUS: *A Film Review* (Rev.

Father Declan Flynn, O.F.M.) are both travelling in the U.S.A. They left us in July and will return towards the end of October.

We take this opportunity of offering to our absent Editor our warm appreciation of the time and energy which he so unstintingly devotes to Focus and the Catholic Film Institute.

Both he and Father Hilary Carpenter are taking advantage of their visit to the United States to arouse interest in the work of the Catholic Film Institute, and we know that our readers and members will wish to join us in expressing our grateful thanks to them both and in wishing them a successful trip.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Children and the Cinema

Sir,

It seems to me that the most Catholics can do to prevent unwholesome films from being a source of child-delinquency is to promote a critical attitude in our children towards the cinema. I do not think that mere banning does any good. I met one young C.O.M. at the time when *No Orchids* was being turned down by councillors all over the country, who went out of her way to see this film and told me, "She couldn't see anything in it, and didn't know what they were making all the fuss about".

The Redemptorist Fathers of Bishop Eton, Liverpool, are doing their best in this direction in their new children's publication, "Playtime", which is reaching an ever-growing number of children in our schools, especially in larger towns and cities, and in which I am delighted to find Father Burke of Focus writing about films. May I hope that these articles will continue and explain in a "grown-up" positive way, what the various films stand for. Their poison is so often innocuously presented. For instance: "This film glorifies the break-up of the family, the division of parents and children—divorce." "That film, gambling, sloth, covetousness," or whichever of the seven deadly sins is involved, so that there is no mistake about it.

Many children go to unsuitable films because their parents want to go and cannot leave them at home. Box office returns in large towns must, therefore, be often misleading. I wonder too

whether the possibility of unemployment in the film industry had anything to do with the vague findings of the Hon. Mrs. Bower's colleagues, and whether the cinemas would ever be reformed from above. Educate the children's taste now, and I believe we are nearer to the solution.

Yours truly,

VIOLET SPARROW.

Bishop's Stortford.

Long or Short Films

Sir,

Your reviewer, "U", is surely somewhat cavalier in his remarks on the length of films. It may or may not be a good thing to string three films together under one title as has been done with the Somerset Maugham short stories, but it is clear that many a "feature length" film has been all too painfully padded to bring it to the required length for quota purposes. There is a place and (I believe) a public for the short film, whether it be factual or fictional. The mechanical curse of the double feature and three hour programme has killed many a contribution to the art of cinema.

Incidentally, Somerset Maugham had been already well-served in feature-length film. *The Moon and Sixpence*, *Rain*, *Of Human Bondage* and *The Razor's Edge* are titles that at once spring to mind.

Yours faithfully,

EDMUND BARRY.

FRENCH FILMS AND STRIPS

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

Educational Foundation Film Library,
Brooklands House, Weybridge,
Surrey.

Service du Cinéma de l'Institut
Français du R.U., Queensberry
Place, South Kensington, S.W.7.

Common Ground, Sydney Place, S.W.7.

Filmostat, La Projection Nouvelle, 29
rue des Favorites, Paris XV.

Lumina—Bloud & Gay, 5 rue Férou,
Paris VIe.

Editions Filmées, 15 rue d'Argenteuil,
Paris Ier.

British Instructional Films Limited,
Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.

Catholic Truth Society Film Library, 40
Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

FILMS

La Famille Martin

Educational Foundation Film Library.
CY.1. Sound. Hire: 7s. 6d. per
reel.

An interesting and informative film. The children would get a vivid impression of French life, the family, the house and home, customs and travel; they get also a bird's eye view of Paris, see some of its renowned thoroughfares and the life of an airport. All this would give them a desire to become better acquainted with France and French. The acting is good so that the story can easily be followed without much knowledge of the language, but all the time the children would be hearing French spoken by natives and so would catch something of the intonation.

Suitability: 15.

Départ de Grandes Vacances

(As above.) CY.2, 1 reel.

This film may have more appeal for younger children as the story and

vocabulary are simpler. We see la Famille Martin packing up and starting on their car journey to the Loire country, where they are to spend the summer holidays. Hurried departure, Mr. Martin leaves the lunch-basket on the pavement in front of the Garches villa. He makes up handsomely by offering a substantial lunch to the family at a way-side café. This gives the opportunity of increasing the vocabulary of gastronomic terms.

Histoire de Poissons

(As above.) CY.3, 1 reel.

La Famille Martin, settled in the little town of St. Aignan-sur-Loire, are

Film Strips on the Mass

THE SACRED ACTIONS

74 Frames

Pictures by John Drummond
Young from the book "The
Sacred Actions", by Father
Hugh McEvoy, S.J.

Price £1 1s. 0d.

THE MASS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

20 Frames. Colour

By S. N. D. Price 7s. 6d.

THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

BLUE COTTAGE,
SUMNER PLACE MEWS,
LONDON, S.W.7

seen enjoying their holiday pursuits: fishing, swimming, marketing; and study for the unsuccessful candidate in the June session of the Baccalauréat. Mr. Martin, who has promised to catch a carp for Mr. le Curé's dinner, once more gets the worst of it (which seems rather a pity) and returning empty-handed has to buy the required fish on his way home.

Here again the vocabulary is easier and spoken deliberately and clearly at a slower pace. The French teacher would do well to use *Histoire de Poissons* and *Départ de Grandes Vacances* before he undertakes to show *La Famille Martin*, i.e., *Le Retour de Madeleine*.

Suitability: 13+.

L'Institut Français du Royaume-Uni has a good film library on which teachers of VI Form French would be well advised to draw. The film Librarian will send a complete list on application. We give a few titles below; they are sufficiently suggestive of the cultural value of the films: "*La Comédie Populaire avant Molière*", "*Dans la nuit des temps*", "*Vaison-la-Romaine*", "*Promenade sur la Seine*", "*Versailles et ses Fantômes*".

Vaison-la-Romaine

15 minutes. 1 reel. Hire: 4s.

This market-town of the south of France shows, through the film, three different aspects and ages of town building.

What might be called the modern town was really built in the Carolingian period, round the monastery and under the inspiration of the monks. Just near by are the splendid remains of the ancient Roman town. Then beyond the river and up the hill we are shown the ruins of the fortress in which the townsfolk took refuge in the time of the invasions. Later, when tranquillity and peace were restored, the inhabitants came down again and cultivated the soil which yielded, and still yields, a splendid harvest of vegetables and fruit, which is sold in the market as well as being the chief industry of the inhabitants.

The commentary is spoken clearly and not too quickly so that the film

should also be useful for students of Latin sufficiently conversant with French.

Dans la nuit des temps

15 minutes. 1 reel. Hire: as above.

The film shows us the schoolboys who, when playing truant, discovered the famous Lascaux (Dordogne) caves, and returned in haste and excitement to tell their schoolmaster. With him, and a taper, they go back to explore more fully, and it proves to be a very interesting discovery. These primitive drawings of the stone age exhibit wonderful accuracy and skill. The animals are always represented moving as the hunter saw them, and they are wonderfully alive.

La Cathédrale

15 minutes. 1 reel. Hire: as above.

A pilgrim to Chartres (representing each and every Christian on his way through life) travels through "*La Beauce*", the country dear to Péguy, and arrives in view of the cathedral. Still following him, we see all the different aspects of the famous shrine, exterior and interior. Close-ups of the sculptures lead us to admire the great variety of expressions on the faces carved in stone. The photographs are magnificent and very artistic. This is a beautiful film.

L'Evangile de la Pierre

French and English versions. 20 minutes. 1 reel. Hire: as above.

Another beautiful film. We have here illustrated through the stone-work of Rheims Cathedral the wonderful story of our Redemption.

La Comédie Populaire avant Molière

15 minutes. Hire: as above.

Should prove useful for revision of Molière. To benefit by it the children should be well acquainted with the social background of the times.

Haute-Seine

15 minutes. Hire: as above.

An interesting journey from the source of the river to Paris, passing through Bar-sur-Seine, Troyes, Montereau, the historic part of Paris along the borders of the Seine.

STRIPS

La Famille Dubois

Common Ground. C.G.A.567, with notes. Sale : 15s.

These 36 frames take us through the day of a middle-class French family and introduce us to the French way of living, which is one of the aims of this new series—though the French do live in houses and do use blankets on their beds. We go to different shops and places with the various members of the family and we even pay a visit to “La Loge de la Concierge”, without which knowledge of the Parisian way of life would be very incomplete indeed.

The notes provide the teacher with a ready-made vocabulary and questions, which can easily be adapted to the needs and interests of the particular children and their age-group.

Suitability : 13+.

First Impressions of France

C.G.A.568, with notes. Sale : as above.

A diagram showing the different routes to France opens the strip—which is going to take us via Newhaven-Dieppe—on to Paris where we see different street-scenes aiming at giving us “first impressions”. The strip ends with pictures of road signs, French money and French stamps. The road signs are written in English, which seems a pity, even though the traveller will usually find that general directions are given in French, English and German.

This second strip appears at times as repeating the first, and we now look forward to a third strip giving us aspects of French life in the country or in a small provincial town.

Suitability : 13 to 15.

Les Petites Souritones

Editions Filmées. No. 76, Les Méfaits de la Désobéissance. No. 111, Huit Jours aux Sports d'Hiver.

The adventures of two little mice—good and dutiful Grisette and untidy and wayward Friquette—were much enjoyed by children of 10. There were many questions about the interesting pictures and good vocabulary work was made enjoyable and lively.

Les Fables de La Fontaine

Editions Filmostat, series of 6 strips. Strip No. 6405 : Le Meunier, son Fils et l'Ane; le Corbeau et le Renard.

This is one of the series. Children have found it delightful and the teacher says : “It proved very useful to keep up zest and interest in the class whilst they were learning the fable by repeating the verses as the pictures appeared and moved on.”

Le Loup de Gubio

Ed. Lumina, Da.8. 25 frames.

It always seems good practice to hear a well-known story in a foreign language, when simply told, and, as in this case, delightfully illustrated by drawings of St. Francis, the Wolf, the little town and its folk dressed in their thirteenth century costume.

Paris

Ed. Filmées, Nos. 54-58.

Very interesting strips to be used preferably with older girls interested in art as well as in the Geography and History of the French capital. Nos. 54, Le Coeur de Paris, and 55, La Rive Droite, are especially to be recommended.

Film as a help to the teaching of Religion :

Jordan Valley

Produced by British Instructional Films Limited, distributed by B.I.F. and C.T.S. Hire : sound 15s. per day, silent 15s. per day.

This is an outstanding example among Scripture background films, and deserves a warm welcome from teachers and all who are concerned to make the New Testament story better known and understood. Aerial photographs, maps and details of landscape and of life as it is still lived in Palestine are skilfully combined so that the meaning of the Scripture words is brought home to us with fresh poignancy. The film does not attempt to teach theology directly, but, accepting the traditional interpretation of the facts of Our Lord's life, provides us with just that amount of topographical detail which is needed for grasping the implications of the

brief descriptions contained in the Gospels.

Commentary, picture and Bible text are closely related throughout the film. There is no preaching, but there is reverence and respect, and the result is a beautiful film.

The language of the commentary is simple and straightforward, so that the film could be used with quite a young audience as well as for adults.

As various people have suggested they would like short notices of new religious, or other, films, we propose in future to add these, to be reviewed in full later.

Your Film Show

The C.F.I. Projection Unit is available for film shows within the London area. Owing to some misunderstanding on the part of some of our friends, we ought to point out that we are not in a position to offer this service gratuitously. Moderate charges must be made to cover costs and recoup depreciation on our Bell Howell Gaumont 601 projector and films.

Enquiries to Catholic Film Institute, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (VOL. III,
Nos. 9 and 10)

<i>Abbott and Costello in the Foreign Legion</i>	(C) (274)
<i>Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, The</i>	(B) (238)
<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>	(C) (239)
<i>A Ticket to Tomahawk</i>	(B) (273)
<i>Bitter Springs</i>	(C) (246)
<i>Cairo Road</i>	(B) (243)
<i>Ellen</i>	(A) (244)
<i>Fancy Pants</i>	(C) (274)
<i>Fanny</i>	(A) (243)
<i>Furies, The</i>	(A) (274)
<i>Gun Crazy</i>	(B) (274)
<i>Have I Lived Before?</i>	(A) (270)
<i>Kuksi</i>	(A) (240)
<i>Lady Takes a Sailor, The</i>	(B) (241)
<i>My Daughter Joy</i>	(B) (245)
<i>My Friend Irma</i>	(A) (249)
<i>Night and the City</i>	(B) (242)

<i>No Sad Songs for Me</i>	(B) (238)
<i>Panic in the Streets</i>	(B) (272)
<i>Portrait of Clare</i>	(B) (271)
<i>Rocketship X.M.</i>	(B) (275)
<i>Ruy Blas</i>	(A) (245)
<i>Sands of Iwo Jima</i>	(B) (241)
<i>Stromboli</i>	(A) (248)
<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>	(B) (270)
<i>Sylvia and the Ghost</i>	(A) (270)
<i>Three Husbands</i>	(B) (244)
<i>Tony Draws a Horse</i>	(A) (246)
<i>Treasure Island</i>	(C) (235)
<i>Trio</i>	(B) (275)
<i>Vatican, The</i>	(C) (248)
<i>Waterfront</i>	(A) (273)
<i>Winchester '73</i>	(B) (243)
<i>Wooden Horse, The</i>	(B) (267)

WE RECOMMEND

<i>Broken Arrow</i>	(B) (302)
<i>Happiest Days of your Life, The</i>	(A) (108)
<i>Red Danube, The</i>	(A) (112)
<i>Story of the Pope, The</i>	(C) (276)
<i>The Blue Lamp</i>	(B) (80)
<i>Twelve O'Clock High</i>	(B) (73)
<i>Vatican, The</i>	(C) (248)
<i>Wooden Horse, The</i>	(B) (267)

Cover Personality

OUR LADY OF
THE FILMS

Our cover is occupied this month by the little girl who mimes the part of Lucia in the Introduction to our film, *Pilgrimage to Fatima*. She is deputising also for Our Lady, for we would wish to have the Blessed Mother preside over our magazine this month, which is not only the month of the Rosary, but also the month in which our film about Fatima is to be offered to the public, with its invitation to listen to the message of Our Lady about the Rosary. It seems to us not unsuitable, then, that we should give this space this month to her who is called *Stella Maris*, the only woman we know who ever had a true right to be called a Star.

We hope that none of our devout friends will be shocked that we invite Our Lady to accept a corner in our magazine, usually given over to film actors and actresses. We think that she would not disdain to smile on them and pray for them and love them, too. They do not all know how great is their responsibility for the things which are seen on the screens of the world, but, for the most part, those whom we like to picture here are giving their talents and their time, through the medium of film, for the entertainment of tired and unhappy people. This is not a very elevated or spiritual occupation, but it is not an unworthy one.

We think that we have been allowed the privilege of co-operating with Our Lady in the use of that same medium for the purpose of spreading her message, given at Fatima thirty-three years ago. Our film is not a super-film; it is not an entertainment film, but it is an honest film and we have tried very hard with photography and words and music to make an instrument by means of which Our Lady will be able to reach many more people than she would have reached, even by the printed page or the broadcast word.

The art of the cinema is "photography": writing with light. Light is, of all God's material gifts to man, the one he can least afford to lose. The worst thing that ever happened to God's creatures was the misuse of

Light. Lucifer, the Angel of Light, became the Angel of Darkness. Into that darkness, which is sin, Satan has tried to drag man ever since. Our Lady's special function is to hold aloft the New Light "that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world".

It is, surely, not without divinely permitted significance, that the most diffused of scientific toys should be the camera, which is useless without light. It is also significant that this instrument should have been hitherto used mainly for the sake of people who have little regard for the light. (I do not say "by"; I say "for".) That means that the Angel of Darkness has had, so far, most benefit of the use of the instrument which needs light in order to be of use to anyone.

This state of affairs we are trying to remedy. We are sure that Our Lady will lend us her prayers and her patronage to this end. She knows so much about light. How gladly she used it in order to see her own beauty reflected, as on a screen, in the eyes of the Child, who was her God and her Son, when, in Chesterton's lovely words:

"Earth and sky changed places for an hour

And heaven looked upwards in a human face."

She who is called the Mirror of Justice, because the Son of Justice saw Himself reflected in "the only glass that would not break with that unbearable light".

Yes, she knows a lot about light and she will surely be pleased to lend us her support in using light to the glory of God and the benefit of man. "In thy light shall we see light."

JOHN VINCENT.

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

NOVEMBER 1950

No. 11

AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS

In the world of art there is a curious snobbery which condescends to the practitioner who is not paid for his work. "Only an amateur" has come to have a meaning which implies that excellence of performance is impossible unless one is earning one's living by means of one's art. If words mean anything, "amateur" should indicate one who is devoted to his art and master of it. However, there is nothing to be gained by quibbling over the word: its inaccurate sense is accepted currency and we can but try to avoid the results of paying too much attention to it.

This is particularly necessary in the world of film. There is an over-weening adulation of the technician who is making his living by his craft and not sufficient recognition of the part which has been played in the development of cinema art by men who were amateurs. Robert O'Flaherty, maker of some of the most beautiful films of all time, was an amateur. It is artistic, imaginative standards rather than payment which is the governing factor between what is excellent in film and what is second-rate. When the Film Encyclical refers to making use of the technical ability of experts and not wasting time and money with amateurs, it is clearly not intended to convey that the vast financial transactions customary with the film industry are necessary before the Church can hope to use film efficiently.

We refer to this matter because there is a considerable misunderstanding among some of our friends as to our intentions with regard to film-production. We have insisted strongly that only the best is good enough for Catholic film makers and users. This does not exclude the efforts of the workers in sub-standard film. We should be singularly unperceptive were we to ignore the first-class work in 16mm. and other sub-standard gauges which has been produced by both professional and amateur cinematographers. We do, however, make a strong plea to amateur film makers of all kinds not to try to exceed what the instrument they use is capable of. There is no merit in trying to emulate the tricks of the studio camera if your instrument is a simple 16mm. camera. The important thing is not how complicated the camera you use but the range and power of the imagination which is behind the camera.

The "Ten Best Amateur Films of 1949", shown during the C.F.I. Summer School, are evidence enough of the artistic achievement possible to cinematographers who are masters of their instrument and recognise its limitations as well as its potentialities.

To our readers, therefore, who are the possessors of sub-standard movie-cameras we would say: "Make yourselves masters of your instrument and there is no limit to the artistic service you may render to the world of worthwhile film".

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 10—SUBJECT-MATTER

Has it ever occurred to you that film depends almost entirely on other media for its subject-matter? Most commercially - successful productions have been adapted from novels or plays; only a comparative few are *original* screen stories.

Does this matter? From some points of view, not at all; from others, it matters a great deal. Consider, for instance, a successful film such as *The Heiress*. Who is bothering because it began life as a story written by Henry James before cinemas existed? Who was Henry James, anyway? asks the young flingoer. Then the story was turned into a play, and now it is a film!

This habit of borrowing and adapting material provides critics with lots of opportunities to draw comparisons between stage and screen characters which are of no interest to the average film - fan, who is seldom a theatre-goer and rarely a reader. Either a film is good, or bad. Where its story originated just doesn't matter. That is the attitude of the least critical film goer. Others are drawn to adaptations of stage successes and/or best-selling novels because their *titles* are so familiar. Often, the name of a book, play, or author is of more value to producers than subject-matter.

This has always been so. In silent film days, Oscar Wilde's plays were filmed and the action was interrupted every few minutes by captions splashing his epigrams all over the screen. The interesting point is that in the silent era people thought film had reached its *ultimate form*. Then talking pictures appeared, upset everyone's calculations, and once again film was considered to have reached its finest and final shape. How could there possibly be another kind of film, people say, for few bother to look ahead, being content with the shape of

films today. And yet, behind the scenes, small groups are forever experimenting on new approaches to production—seeking ways and means to make it unnecessary for this wonderful *visual* art to be so dependent not only upon novels and plays, but upon the spoken word. Here is the reason. The play depends on human speech, the novel on the written word, and film, when permitted to flower to its fullest extent, upon picture language. When dialogue is the main form of narration on the screen, as it is today, the spoken word restricts the visual flow. Nor is this overcome by the numerous skilful ruses adopted to keep visuals on the move whilst dialogue has its say.

The fundamental point is that in true motion picture construction, visuals should *supersede* words as the form of narration, and although this means in certain ways employing silent film technique, it also means employing *sound* in new ways. The film of the future will almost certainly be as different to the talking film of today as is the latter from the silent film of yesterday. People are at work on a formula for wedding visuals to illustrative music and natural sound, with a minimum of human speech—a form of story-telling that would be *universally* understood.

We need to remember that at the peak of silent film production, film was becoming the greatest universal medium ever known, needing no translation. The introduction of speech confined the circulation of films to those countries speaking the tongues in which they were made. There are hundreds of different words in as many tongues for Man, Dog, Tree, but *pictures* of a Man, a Dog, or a Tree are immediately recognised by all, or nearly all peoples. Have you not felt how inadequate is the spoken word when watching a film in a language you do not speak—characters chattering

away whilst sentences flash on and off the bottom of the screen to help you to understand what they are saying?

What a travesty of true film-making. A series of visuals can explain a situation more vividly and swiftly than it can be described by dialogue. Film deserves to be independent of literature and drama. It has its own great contribution to make. It is true that film adaptations of classic works have introduced great writers to film audiences, but to the discerning, the adaptation can never be completely satisfying, for whilst film can bring the action of a plot, the characters and dialogue passages to the screen, it cannot bring literary value, and

without this no book is of value. Further, every reader's visualisation of a character in a book is a personal mind-picture. When he sees that character brought to life on the screen, the character becomes a stranger. Film is great enough to have material created for it. It needs shaping with universal vision. Think of the universal gifts bestowed on man—Christianity, Nature, Music, Sculpture, Painting—all transcending national boundaries. Freed from speech, and no longer dependent upon the written word, film can find expression in a universal picture-music language which shall link the peoples of the earth together in understanding.

No. 4—A Positive Approach to the Cinema

The Doctor Looks At The Cinema

By DR. DENIS DOOLEY

This is too large a subject for me to say all I would like to in the space allotted to me. I therefore confine myself to one or two aspects only.

As a doctor, I must think of the effect of the films on the health of the person attending them. The health of the body and the health of the mind. If I follow the classical definition of health as being "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano", I should really mention the health of the mind first as being of prime importance, but I reverse the order, as the effect of the cinema on the health of the body can be dealt with so easily.

The modern cinema is usually large, clean and well ventilated. Watching a programme through can be a pleasure, which, distracting the mind from its routine round of anxieties and troubles produces a salutary effect on the complex mechanisms and workings of the body.

Occasionally one does come across overcrowding in cinemas which is open to criticism, for such might well be the cause of the dissemination of

diseases, especially of the upper respiratory tract.

There is a duty of parents to see that their children do not spend hours every week in cinemas with stuffy unhealthy atmospheres, when their time could be so much better spent playing games in the local park. There is, of course, a serious responsibility of cinema proprietors to see that their halls are adequately ventilated and clean.

A Healthy Mind

Before dwelling on the effect of films on the mind, it might be a good thing to dwell for a moment on the significance of a healthy mind, which surely means a sane mind, or sanity. Now sanity is akin to sanctity, which, according to St. Thomas, means the integration of the human personality. To be sane, I must try to become a saint, which means to become a real man, to become whole, and what Pius XI called "Uomo completo".

To attain this end, I must take all

my faculties and powers and develop them to their utmost. I must take my ability to think, and indeed, to criticise; my ability to draw out of myself what is in me, and my faculty of being able to add to this in order to grow; and I must develop these and all my other powers to their highest degree. When I have done this, I shall have a sane healthy mind, I shall become a personality and maybe a saint, which is all that really matters. Now to whatever extent films and cinema-going help towards this end, they are surely good, and to be encouraged for the education and entertainment of the old and young.

The Hollywood Personality

The Hollywood meaning of personality, however, is a far different thing. The Hollywood personality is surely the shadow of a real personality. I am reminded of the story which tells of a race of men who lost their shadows, and who dared not go out in the sun for fear of being laughed at. The theory being that a man and his shadow are a fundamental unit which alone demand respect. Now whether a man loses his shadow when he loses his soul, I do not know, but I do believe that the man who loses his soul is a shadow of a man; and furthermore, that all one sees at the films are shadows of men, and therein lies the danger that film-goers will and do fall in love with these shadows.

An Influence for Good

But films can have a tremendous influence for good on the community. The value of films for didactic and educational purposes is obvious. The showing of pictures about the life and peoples of other countries should have no other but good effects. The outlook is broadened and the mind is filled with valuable information. But on a broader basis these types of films, and others dealing with the daily lives and doings of bigger and better men than ourselves, have a tremendous value in the development of the imagination, which is of supreme importance. In a strict scientific sense, imagination is the power of the mind which enables it to form images of objects not present to the senses; but I use the word in a much broader sense, meaning that inward, penetrating, intense, know-

ledge, which fills and satisfies the soul. It involves a sense of awe and wonder, and an intense realisation of truth, and it is the birth of a power to communicate to others the thrill or deep experiences that one has experienced oneself. A person whose imagination is cultivated in this way is a better person than before.

We must have more films which have this effect on film-goers, films which extol and inculcate the virtue of courage and appreciation of holiness. We must have more films which are an inspiration to increased action; for, action, we are told by the psychiatrist, is the remedy for brooding, anxiety and concentration on self, hypertrophy of the ego, exaggerated introspection, and in general for the dangers attending an ill-guided internal life.

The Proper Use of the Cinema

I am sure Cardinal Newman would have praised the proper use of the cinema to cultivate the mind, and its use "to open the mind, to correct it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties; application, flexibility, method, critical exactness; sagacity, resource, address and eloquent expression", and in fact the value of the film when properly used in the pursuit of a liberal education; for such a training will help produce a healthy mind and, as Lowell said, "To a healthy mind the world is a constant challenge of opportunities".

But alas how many of one's patients are suffering from psychosomatic complaints which are primarily brought about by a frustration and dissatisfaction engendered by the machine-made phantasies of the films.

The Jesuits are wise in wanting their pupils at an early age—as the mind of the young can so easily be influenced. I am not going so far as to say that the recitation by the child of nursery rhymes such as "Three Blind Mice", with all its subtle implications of cruelty, will explain away the cruel acts of the man; although some psychiatrists will uphold this thesis. But I say that films which pander to the lower passions and appear to accept as permissible the excesses which proceed from their misuse, are a menace; and have serious

effects on the minds of the young and immature adult. They are the breeding ground of many of the neuroses and other upsets which are the cause of so much unhappiness in the world today. There is something to be said for the theory that the first things we remember do influence our outlook on life, and therefore the way we live our lives. And as we grow, vivid incidents leave vivid impressions, which have an influence for good or evil on our minds.

And since so many of these impressions are left by films it is important that they are not evil ones for fear our souls begin to believe in them.

"The highest Faith makes still the highest man

For we grow like the things our souls believe

And rise or sink as we aim high or low."

CARDINAL MINDSZENTY ON THE SCREEN

As we go to press, a private showing of *Treason* the film of the "trial" of Cardinal Mindszenty, is arranged for the benefit of the C.F.I. A full review will appear in our next issue but we cannot refrain from urging all our readers to make certain of seeing this courageous effort to tell the world the

truth about the great Hungarian Primate.

Written by a Catholic and produced by a Jew, this film was made in face of strong efforts to sabotage it. Whatever the critics may say about it in this country, it is a film to be demanded at all your local cinemas.

**POWERFUL DRAMATISATION OF THE
STORY THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD !**

"TREASON"

Certificate: A

**THE STORY OF THE INFAMOUS TRIAL
OF CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

COMMENCING NOVEMBER 3rd.

FOR TWO WEEKS ONLY

**LONDON PAVILION PICCADILLY
CIRCUS**

BOOK REVIEW

Visitation. The Story of the Medical Missionaries of Mary. By Andrew Buchanan, 5/- M.M.M., Drogheda, Ireland.

Andrew Buchanan has added an important Preface to this new edition of his book of the film. An interesting step in the direction of true religious film making was achieved when he completed *Visitation* for the Medical Missionaries of Mary. He demonstrated that religious films could be made (and as the author would insist, should be made) in a completely professional way at a cost which is within the reach of the religious organisations desiring to make use of film for the spreading of their ideas. His view is that films destined primarily for the propagation of religious belief and practice should not be subject to the ordinary commercial routine, but, since their normal distribution will also be non-theatrical, should be available to such religious organisations at a cost which represents the offering of the services of men (and women) dedicated, as to a vocation, to the use of film.

This book proves, as His Eminence Cardinal Griffin writes in the Foreword, "beyond a doubt, the necessity of having skilled and fully trained technicians in the making of religious films—a point on which great emphasis is laid by Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical Letter on the use and misuse of films".

It is true that the only group known to us at the moment possessing both the ideals and technical ability to put this papal injunction into practice is Scriptural Productions, Mr. Buchanan's own independent organisation for the production and development of religious films, but it is one of the objects of the Catholic Film Institute to bring into existence, with Mr. Buchanan's indispensable assistance, many such groups.

The second necessary step in the formation of such a group devoted to the production of truly religious and

independent films is to secure the means of distribution. The Preface which Andrew Buchanan contributes to this new edition of his book describes the pioneering venture of Mother Mary Martin in getting her film seen by thousands of people independently of the commercial distributors. As the Author points out, "Producing a film is one problem; distributing it is quite another and, in its utterly different way, just as difficult. To combine both production and distribution with success, the Medical Missionaries have added an inspiring page to the history of film."

To allay suspicions that here is an attempt to sabotage trade unions, it is necessary to insist on the fact that we claim the right to use the medium of film in the service of religion without violating the province of the commercial concern in the same way that other material things are used by and for religious organisations without upsetting the balance of trade. It is all a question of vocation. The Medical Missionaries have a vocation which embraces the use of all proper means in the service of humanity.

Fortunately for the expression of their ideals in film, they have found in Andrew Buchanan, a layman, who, though not a member of the Body of the Church, is clearly dedicated to this service in the use of film. May his and their example stimulate Catholics to offer themselves and their talents to the same end so that what Pius XI called "the most powerful means of influencing the masses", may be given its fair chance of serving mankind in a positive way for good.

Even if you have already a copy of this book, you should obtain and read this new edition, both for the sake of Buchanan's valuable new Preface and also because you will be assisting the Medical Missionaries in the devoted work for which, as a religious Congregation, they exist.

J. A. V. B.



Irene Dunne

The Pattern of IRENE DUNNE

By Crosby Lockwood

Irene Dunne received me in her suite at Claridge's just before sailing. The appointment had been promised and then postponed and finally seemed impossible: but Miss Dunne was anxious not to disappoint us and interrupted her last-minute arrangements in our favour.

The first lasting impression to pass on is of a woman who is "très grande dame" and that is to say, is it not, simple, direct and friendly? I dare not describe her frock, but she was wearing the hat you see in the picture and it is a hat to make a young man sigh with despair, soft and infinitely bewitching, enhancing the personality and delighting the beholder. Let me tell you it is a white satin cloche with the crown covered in spider-web lace and set off with a grey-tipped ostrich feather and long stem sticking out at the back.

Her visit to England had evidently been a great success. Still, for so sensitive an actress, there must have been a certain diffidence in accepting the rôle of Queen Victoria in *The Mudlark*. Would the British take kindly to an American star in such a

part? Well, any diffidence had clearly been triumphantly overcome by all the friendliness she met amongst us and by her own charm and sympathy. But only, I think, to a Catholic would she have said that her first thought on reaching London was to go to the Jesuit Church in Farm Street round the corner ("just the same as our churches at home, of course") to put the whole enterprise under Divine protection. "Then too," she added, to my surprise, "there are dangers one faces in making a film—those enormous arc lamps, the heavy equipment, the intricate system of electric wiring—hardly ever do we get through without some mishap or accident. A little time ago I had what might have been a serious fall tripping over wires." This aspect of film-making had never occurred to me, but it is real to Miss Dunne and, just before our conversation, she had been round to the church on a farewell visit, with her 15-year-old daughter, to say "Thank you".

But naturally it is the artistic and spiritual aspects of the film that mostly concern Miss Dunne. The inspiration of her art is its opportunity to get across to us all the good and happy and noble things of life. She is convinced that the film industry as a whole, with its vast power for good or ill, does appreciate the need to meet the deeper demands of the human spirit. And perhaps these demands are more clamant now than at any other time in the world's history. Speaking of screen work she said: "Many of us in the film industry, not only the stars but also the leading producers in America and Europe, are anxious to be worthy of the responsibility that falls on us. And this is only to be done by setting a guard on the power of the pictures, by presenting clean and wholesome values, and by maintaining a sound moral standard of entertainment for the tremendous audience that is the family of the cinema." We both felt this was almost a sermon and laughed together, and Miss Dunne concluded: "Motion pictures are becoming increasingly conscious of the debt they themselves owe to Christian and spiritual values and you can see this from the efforts made to concentrate on more humane and cultured pictures, from the emphasis laid on right and justice, and from the

continuous interest in films of a religious character."

I had found for Miss Dunne a small bas-relief in plaster of Our Lady, a dear and youthful Virgin, under thick glass; and Miss Dunne was very pleased with it. Of no intrinsic value, it is an example of Bohemian work of perhaps a century ago and happily it seems that Miss Dunne already has a larger piece of similar workmanship representing the Holy Family and this is framed and centred on her wall at home.

I must just add a comment on the recent visit to Rome. "This has left me," she said, "with unforgettable memories and has brought home, as nothing else in my life, the spiritual grandeur of

our Faith and the need to uphold everywhere in our work and our thoughts its message of good will and its hopes for the peace of the world."

And now it was time to go and at that moment a friend arrived to say "bon voyage" and she was carrying a baby girl of about a year old. One glance at Irene Dunne's face as she welcomed that baby sent me away along those cushioned corridors of luxury with the reflection that here after all is the heart of the matter, a woman's heart. But, for every woman's heart there are times of doubt and difficulty and I shall not forget hearing this great lady, whose name and fame ring across continents, say "in such times my Faith has never failed me".

INSTITUTE NOTES

North of the Border

The C.F.I. paid its first visit to Scotland recently when lectures were given at a week-end Catholic Film Conference arranged at Dundee University. We have nothing but admiration for the group of keen young Catholics who organised the conference. In addition to a series of interesting films, including *Monsieur Vincent*, *The Last Chance* and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, a very comprehensive exhibition of Visual Aids was provided at which projectors, strip projectors, sound - recorders, epidiascopes, screen and other kinds of apparatus were demonstrated.

The group makes itself responsible for a mobile cinema unit, a production unit and is very active in introducing Focus to the various contacts made.

Regional Groups

This provides an opening for another appeal to interested Catholics in the great provincial centres to let us know of their efforts and enterprises for Catholic Film Action. What a few enthusiastic Catholics in Dundee can do can be done by Catholics in England.

Perhaps we need to make it clear that our aim is to act as a co-ordinating

centre of Catholic film activity in the country. We do not wish to set up a film-dictatorship. Unless we know what is being done in the Provinces, however, we cannot fulfil our objectives. We hear from time to time of most interesting achievements in cinematography on the part of priests and laymen. If they would only let us into the picture we could be of great service mutually.

Congress Film

The Hierarchy Congress provided some exciting material for our cameramen. We saw the first rushes a few days ago and we feel confident that an important contribution to Catholic film records will be the result. A film such as this must be something more than a news-reel: careful research for historically interesting antiquities, contemporary cartoons, together with an imaginative build-up of the available material should enable us to bring out a film that will be useful to look at years hence. Above all, careful editing and commentary is necessary. It will, therefore, be some months before we can hope to have the Congress film ready, but it will be worth waiting for.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

SEPTEMBER AFFAIR

Starring: Joan Fontaine, Joseph Cotten and Françoise Rosay.
Producer: Hal Wallis. **Director:** William Dieterle. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A.
Category: A. **Running time:** 105 minutes.

This insignificant piece is exactly the kind of thing which the title would lead you to expect. Set, for the most part, in or around Florence, the love affair in question concerns David Lawrence (Joseph Cotten) an American business man, and Manina Stuart, a concert pianist played by Joan Fontaine. A plane on which they were thought to have been passengers crashes in the Mediterranean and David and Manina, taking advantage of their reported decease, decide to settle down in a villa near Florence. The fact that the former is a married man with a wife and son in New York causes some misgivings—particularly on Manina's part—but these are quickly and easily overcome. When Manina suggests that perhaps they ought to reveal the truth and return to their former lives, David replies, "Fate has saved us from death and offered us a new life; the only question we have to ask is 'are we in love?'" Yes, it was as easy as that apparently. Later, when Manina is told that what they are doing is selfish, cowardly and wrong, she answers, "Is it wrong because we are happy?" and that seems to be the only criterion she applies to the morality of their arrangement to live together in Florence.

I think we are intended to feel sorry for David's ever-loving wife who carries on manfully at home in New York, but even so, divorce is taken so much for granted as a justifying formula that one cannot be entirely happy about this film.

There are some good shots early on of Rome, Naples, Pompeii and other Italian cities, and some excellent music at the end when Manina plays at a Carnegie Hall concert in New York.

Joan Fontaine is an attractive and intelligent actress and she gives a good performance here, but it seems a pity that her talents should be wasted on a film of this kind. Personally, I found it tedious. You may perhaps stick it out until the hundred and fifth minute merely to discover whether or not they decide to part, but as you probably won't bother to go at all, let me tell you that they do.

F. A. M.

FORTUNES OF CAPTAIN BLOOD

Starring: Louis Hayward, Patricia Medina, George Macready.
Producer: Harry Joe Brown.
Director: Gordon Douglas. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** U.
Category: C. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

Blood in all directions—Blood dashing, Blood gallant, blood flowing. Ninety minutes of duels sandwiched with drinking and lovemaking. The conventional pirate crew, the broadsides of shot, the beautiful woman in distress won by the reckless bravado of an Irish buccaneer. Plenty of swords are crossed, plenty of cannons fired, plenty dared and plenty done.

If you are fond of these stories, you will enjoy yet another one. But if you have seen many, or any, you will know the story already. Anyhow, Billy Bragg, played by William Bevan, will make you chuckle, for it is the best characterisation in the film.

It's good of its type and pleasantly whiles away a weary hour and a half in clean uncomplicated story-telling.

M. H.

LE SORCIER DU CIEL

(Heaven and Earth)

Starring: Georges Rollin and Alfred Adam, with Alexander Rignault.
Director: Marcel Blistène.
Distributors: Films de France.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 90 minutes.

This film version of the life of St. John Baptist Vianney will certainly give rise to a great deal of discussion about the success or otherwise of screen hagiography. We have now had a sufficiently large number of film biographies to be able to assess both merits and weaknesses. *Monsieur Vincent*, *Song of Bernadette*, *Don Bosco*, *Maria Goretti*, *St. Francis of Assisi*, *Father Damien*; these are a varied enough assortment to have covered most aspects of the manifestations of sanctity among mankind and to allow us a judgment.

In the first place, the film biography of a saint can be criticised from the same technical standards applied to other "lives": Madame Curie, Queen Victoria, Pasteur and others have been subjected to the treatment and at once it is evident that a prime weakness in each case is that the film is not really capable of covering a whole lifetime adequately. It becomes an essay in make-up and tottering senility on the part of the actor rather than an exposition of the motivating forces which governed the life; a question of endurance rather than of enlightenment.

In the case of the saint, another difficulty arises in addition to the histrionic and artistic one of expressing heroic sanctity. There is always a moment in the life of the saint in which the "theme", so to term it, of his special relationship with God becomes apparent. The rest of his story is the ordinary one of persons and places, of temptations and achievements which belong to any of the heroes and heroines of God. The problem of the film-maker, who attempts to give us the life of a saint, is to pick out and to focus for us precisely those moments. To some extent it was done in *Monsieur Vincent* and almost inevitably in *Maria Goretti*, but all the other films mentioned suffer from the film defect of trying to say too much.

An additional obstacle over which *Le Sorcier du Ciel* has not been completely successful is the almost impossibility of expressing in visual form on the screen the growth of interior holiness. In *Monsieur Vincent* this process was "externalised" in the works of charity which were the outward result of the supernatural charity so superbly suggested by Pierre Fresnay. In *Le Sorcier du Ciel*, it is not Georges Rollin's fault that the essence of a life which centred and grew in holiness in and around the Confessional has not been satisfactorily transmitted across the screen. Instead, the scriptwriter has concentrated on the diabolic obsession which was an astonishing feature of the life of the Curé D'Ars and which gives a certain theme to the film but which also distorts the life of this particular saint.

This is not to say that the film is without merit or usefulness from a Catholic point of view. I am sure that, in many ways, it will prove to be more popular than *Monsieur Vincent*, mainly because it presents the life of the saint in the more popular terms of the older-fashioned saint's life. There is no question that Georges Rollin, who plays the part of the Curé with an affectionate devotion, has put a great deal of work into the characterisation both on the spiritual as well as on the physical plane. He took the trouble to make a Spiritual Retreat before essaying the rôle, and, apart from the happy accident of his physical resemblance to John Baptist Vianney, there is a great deal of skill in his presentation of the character. A warm humanity seems to radiate from him and he has the most charmingly disarming smile, both in his eyes and on his face. He is evidently sincere in his portrayal and it should be most acceptable to Catholic audiences who are tired of the usual run of gangster and psychopathic films. I suggest that a demand be made for it at your local cinema.

It is a pity that the producer did not make it clear by means of a prologue, first, that the story is an historical one and, secondly, that the dancing which the Curé so passionately denounced, was the obscene and disgusting exhibitions derived from the licentiousness of the Revolution.

FLESH WILL SURRENDER

MANON

Starring: Aldo Fabrizi. **Producer:** Marcello d'Amico. **Director:** Alberto Lattuada. **Distributors:** G.C.T. Italian dialogue with English subtitles. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 93 minutes.

Gabriele D'Annunzio's novel, on which this film is based, is called *Il Delitto di Giovanni Episcopo*, which might be suitably rendered as *John Bishop's Crime*. Why it should be necessary to call the film *Flesh Will Surrender* passes comprehension. If the title means anything relevant, it means that even a worm will turn.

Episcopo is a good, respectable but spineless civil servant who allows himself to be imposed upon by a blackguard and contemptuously cuckolded by his wife. Truly Italian, he has a great love for his young son and when the blackguard is about to strike the boy he sticks a knife into him.

In spite of D'Annunzio's flamboyant and irreverent paganism and the fact that the setting is Rome and Tivoli around the turn of the century, the film is surprisingly free from anything anti-Catholic. Though we are meant to feel sympathy with the killer—indeed Aldo Fabrizi's portrayal of his character seems the *raison d'être* of the film—it is not sympathy with a rebellious, unrepentant murderer but rather with a normally kind and gentle man suddenly goaded to homicide as a consequence of parental love and humbly willing to make reparation.

One sequence could have been omitted without detriment to the story, though doubtless it would be claimed that it contributes to the characterisation. It is suggestive in the strict sense of that abused word and its partial reticence none the less involves playing to the gallery of sensuality.

The film has received critical approbation for its technique. To me something about the visuals and a certain rawness of the soundtrack had a suggestion of the old-fashioned and unsophisticated. But in these days some relief from hypersophistication in the cinema need not be always unwelcome.

Starring: Cécile Aubrey, Serge Regnani and Michel Auclair. **Director:** H.-G. Glouzot. *Certificate:* A. (L.C.C.). *Category:* A. *Running time:* 95 minutes.

Abbé Antoine François Prévost, who died at the age of 66 in 1763, wrote on many subjects of a romantic nature. Of the 39 volumes of his works, published in 1806, the best known is "Manon Lescaut". This famous story has attracted the attention of musical composers, among whom the best-known are Massenet and Puccini. As a result of these efforts a glamorous mantle has been thrown over the history of a Parisian courtesan who preferred riches and soft-living at all costs to honour and decency.

It was left for Henri-George Clouzot, the distinguished French director of *Le Corbeau* and *Quai des Orfèvres*, to strip away every vestige of seamliness and propriety from the fable in his film version of the story, the film which so unaccountably took the Grand Prix at Venice in 1949.

Setting the scene in France, 1944, Clouzot makes his Manon a gold-digging collaborationist, his Des Grieux a Maquisard who passes with surprising suddenness from Resistance to Black Marketeering when his trollop sheds a few crocodile tears. Death comes to the lady at the hands of a posse of Arabs, who shoot her down in company with a band of Jewish refugees on their way to Palestine.

The most objectionable final sequence has been cut from the version tolerated by the L.C.C. Other shots too, from the macabre funeral procession of dead hostages, have also been cut since the film was seen in Venice. Nevertheless, in spite of this trimming it remains the most decadent piece of cinema to have been seen in London for a long time.

Apart from some impressive shots of refugees in the vessel and trekking over the desert—always a sure thing for the cameraman—the technique and acting is second-rate. Political manoeuvrings seem to have won it its distinction at Venice and the possibility of cashing in on sensational publicity appears to have brought it to England.



Fear of atom bomb destroys atomic scientist in a bombed church

Symbolism in Film

The man whose bomb would destroy London stands behind a prehistoric monster



SEVEN DAYS TO NOON

With: Barry Jones, Olive Sloane, Andre Morell, Sheila Manahan, Hugh Cross, Joan Hickson and Ronald Adam. **Director:** John Boulting. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 94 minutes.

After the Press showing of this intensely gripping and beautifully photographed film, I ventured to congratulate Director John Boulting on a really excellent piece of work. Almost gloomily he murmured, "I am not satisfied with it!" Since I was still feeling well nigh breathless with pent-up excitement I could but admire the diffidence of the artist who never admits perfection.

Built, like all successful films, round a simple idea followed logically to its conclusion, *Seven Days To Noon* is embellished with a series of closely observed and accurately reproduced cameos and vignettes which bring the film to astonishingly vivid and authentic life. Made on location in London's streets and thoroughfares, this is certainly the most successful of the attempts to bring the camera out of the studios. The opening shots of trains arriving at Waterloo, of the early morning crowds moving, ant-like, across London River's bridges, are most impressive. The convoys of buses and army lorries used for the evacuation scenes were handled with complete assurance and the crowds made to play their parts with convincing sang-froid.

Any film made by the Boulting Brothers is something more than an exercise in photography. *Thunder Rock*, *Pastor Hall*, *Fame is the Spur*, *Brighton Rock*, are all more or less successful attempts to discuss a moral problem. If they do not also present an answer this is only to say that easy answers to difficult questions are not often convincing answers. *Seven Days To Noon* poses the question of the morality of the use of atomic bombs. Some people are almost certain to say that the film has political propagandist undertones. I think that the Boultings were primarily captivated by an enthralling and original version of the "chase" theme, but once having accepted it they worked honestly through the pattern

implied by an eminent scientist who, through religious scruples, steals a uranium bomb and threatens to blow Parliament and the centre of London to smithereens unless, by noon on Sunday, the Prime Minister has promised that all work on atomic bombs shall cease.

There are a number of symbolic touches in the film: the scientist, standing behind the skeleton of a prehistoric monster in the Natural History Museum, listening to the Prime Minister's broadcast; the crazy man being shot by a fear-crazy soldier as he emerges from a bomb-ruined church in which he has been praying; a religious text, "The Wages of Sin is Death," eventually abandoned by the man who carried it.

All have worked so well to make this the British film of the quarter. First, perhaps, the screen-writers, Frank Harvey and Roy Boulting for their first rate job-of-work from Paul Dehn's original story. Then the direction and camera-work and the magnificently-timed cutting of the film, from a leisurely beginning to an absolutely terrific last few minutes.

Then, of course, the acting of a hand-picked cast: no stars but all actors. Barry Jones, Olive Sloane, Joan Hickson, Andre Morell give magnificent performances and succeed in creating and maintaining recognisable characters. Hugh Cross and Sheila Manahan, too, as the young couple necessary to the story but not overburdening it, are admirable. A multitude of small part players, too, have to be praised for excellent work in a film which it will pay you to see again and again. I will wager that the tension will not diminish even after the third dose.

Two adverse criticisms: in a film so consistently free from stage clichés, it was irritating to see the parson answering the detective backwards from down stage. Query: do Church of England parsons ever have moustaches?

Second: I cannot believe that English people would, even in the circumstances depicted, leave their pets pathetically whining and mewing on the station platforms and the empty street.

Last bouquet, and a big one, to John Addison for intelligent and interesting film music.

V.



Barry Jones as Professor Willingdon in "Seven Days to Noon"

SEVEN DAYS TO NOON

Goldie (Olive Sloane) is caught as she is about to examine Professor Willingdon's bag





Sidney Poitier and Richard Widmark

NO WAY OUT

Richard Widmark and Linda Darnell





Richard Widmark "is very good at being bad"

NO WAY OUT

Starring: Richard Widmark, Linda Darnell, Stephen McNally and Sidney Poitier. **Producer:** Darryl F. Zanuck. **Director:** Joseph L. Mankiewicz. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

This film is what it sets out to be—an unbiased presentation of the colour problem. Is it better than *Pinky*? That is hard to say, but I think it is. Anyway it is very different. The film is neither pro white nor pro black, but simply pro good, wherever the good is, and if it is anti anything, it is anti prejudice from whatever quarter. Wherever the colour problem is acute, as it is in America, it will cause many searchings of heart and, we hope, many acts of contrition and reparation. It shows that there are injustices on both sides, even though they may be heavily weighted on one of them, and that there is "no way out" except that of charity and mutual understanding. Those of us on this side of the Atlantic, where the problem does not jostle us at every turn, may find in this film a story well told, without mawkishness and layers of sentiment.

The problem is presented in vivid black and white. A young and brilliant

newly qualified negro doctor (Sidney Poitier) is taken on the staff of a county hospital by the senior M.O. (Stephen McNally). His first job is an emergency call to the prison ward where two crooks, who are brothers, are suffering severe injuries through being shot in the legs by the police. The young doctor makes a hasty diagnosis that one of them has a tumour of the brain, and as he is carrying out a spinal test the patient collapses and dies. The other (Richard Widmark), who has a pathological hatred of coloured people, accuses the doctor of murder. So the story begins. But there we will leave it for you to see how the plot develops and speeds on to a dramatic close. There is a particularly tense moment when the coloured doctor, who has been wounded by the maniac, attempts to save the life of his would-be murderer by making a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood from his leg. Cold perspiration breaks out on the darkie's face. It may break out on yours as you witness it.

Here, then, is good serious entertainment, but the emphasis is on the word "serious". It would have been better for a few lighter touches. Even in the most serious symphony there are lighter motifs. There are changes of key and tempo, and each instrument plays, before it is finished, more than one tune. Human nature is complex. We act variously and often surprisingly in different moods and circumstances. There are many facets to our personality. Here one felt that each character (with one notable exception) had only one reaction and only one thing to say. In Richard Widmark's part that was right. He was a monomaniac. There was no let up from his being bad—bad through and through. And, if I may say so, Mr. Widmark is very good at being bad. Sidney Poitier was sincere and impressive as the dark doctor. One could not but admire his simple dignity. Had the script allowed him to show a sense of humour—and there were opportunities enough, especially in the scenes at his home—we would have been captivated by him. To Linda Darnell alone was given the chance of playing a complex character—an unattractive one indeed—and she does it very well.

THE ASPHALT JUNGLE

Starring: Sterling Hayden, Sam Jaffe, Jean Hagen, Louis Calhern, John McIntire. **Producer:** Arthur Hornblow, Junior. **Director:** John Huston. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 105 minutes.

Except for the Police Commissioner (John McIntire), we encounter no one for the first 45 minutes who is not a criminal, and even then it is merely the sickly wife of a shady lawyer. We are in the jungle world of crime, where all are predatory. We see and hear the crime being plotted and the incipient burglars and double-crossers amongst us have the advantage of seeing how it is done. We see also the police triumphing, though, possibly for security reasons, we are not shown their lines of reasoning. They just appear at crucial moments until all the gang are accounted for. We, like the criminals, never know what the police will do next. For the most part, we watch events from the criminals' uncertain angle of vision. Towards the end the police chief gives a pep talk to the Press, so that they may know that without the rule of law and the work of the police all that remains is the law of the jungle.

The master criminal, known as "Doc" (Sam Jaffe), is an imperturbable reasoning machine with no moral concepts. He is very polite, too, in an old fashioned German way. With two exceptions, the rest of the criminals are excitable Latin types. The exceptions are the killer (Sterling Hayden) and a double-crossing lawyer, very smooth indeed (Louis Calhern).

The gentle sex includes (a) a girl on the fringe of the criminal world (Jean Hagen), who has the probably ennobling quality of being in love with the killer; (b) the smooth lawyer's sickly and colourless wife (Dorothy Tree); and (c) his mistress, politely called his girl friend (Marilyn Monroe), who calls him Uncle Lon.

And I do not forget that there are also a criminal private detective (Brod Dexter) and a criminal lieutenant of police (Barry Kelley).

The only outsider of consequence in this rogue's gallery is the sobbing wife of a dying gangster.

It is a sordid story, set for the most part in squalid surroundings. The whole thing is against crime, but these are just bad men from stock. There is none of that struggle between good and evil in the criminal himself, little of the alternation of good with bad to make us believe that these are real persons. It is when these factors come into play that we can be moved not just to a state of excited interest but into a condition of mind where compassion has something to say whilst avoiding any false hero worship. The kind of thing I mean may be clear if I mention films such as *Brighton Rock*, *Odd Man Out* and *The Informer*. Compared with them, *The Asphalt Jungle* is just another tale of cops and burglars. Very definitely Category "A", I think.

X.

THE JACKPOT

Starring: James Stewart, Barbara Hale, James Gleason, Fred Clark. **Producer:** Samuel G. Engel. **Director:** Walter Lang. A 20th Century-Fox Film. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

James Stewart wins prizes to the value of 12,000 dollars in a radio quiz competition. Prizes, like birthday presents, can be a source of embarrassment. This embarrassment for James Stewart becomes desperation when he realises that the Income Tax authorities regard such awards as loot and subject, therefore, to tax to the extent of 7,000 dollars. That's a bit thick, don't you think?

The film is not so much an indictment of American radio salesmanship as a good humoured commentary on some of its repercussions.

The direction is particularly good. James Stewart acquits himself very well indeed in his light comic part. Barbara Hale is likewise very good. I was delighted to see that the two children, although precocious by our standards, are yet well behaved and obedient. The other day a priest told me that parents are the last people on God's earth that ought to have children. Perhaps he had been seeing too many films.

T.



Cyril Cusack as Edward Marston



Jennifer Jones as Hazel Woodus

GONE TO EARTH

Starring: Jennifer Jones, David Farrar, with Cyril Cusack.

Producers and Directors: Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.

Distributors: British Lion. In technicolor. *Certificate:* A.

Category: A. *Running time:* 110 minutes.

Having read in *The Times* how masters of fox hounds had refused to co-operate in the making of this film, I expected a strong attack on hunting. There is not so much of that, but rather an essay in parallelism.

Hazel Woodus is in a sense identified with her pet fox. The story is adapted from the book by Mary Webb and life as viewed by this lady novelist seems to consist in innocent creatures, such as women and foxes, being pursued to their doom by vile manhood. Even when they do a lot of damage to husbands and chickens, our sympathies are still meant to be with them rather than their victims.

Squire Reddin is a menace to the woman-fox equation. We are left in no doubt from the start that he is a bad man. Not only does he call foxes vermin. (And that means he is contemptuous of women too. See?) Believe it or not, he actually says: "Vermin. Ha-ha-ha!" And he gallops

after Hazel right in the middle of the county fair, making the poor girl quite conspicuous. Sensuality, that's what he is, always popping up and lurking.

True spiritual love is the Rev. E. Marston. Hazel marries him. (Separate bedrooms.) But one day she is missing. She is at the Squire's. (Not separate bedrooms.) The elders and deacons of her husband's chapel don't approve of this. They like hounding women and watching fox hunts. They do both on the same day. And remember, Hazel has a pet fox which she carries in her arms. (A bit smelly I should have thought.) And there is a disused shaft that people can fall down and get killed. And the title of the film is *Gone to Earth*. There you are.

That sort of catastrophe would not have happened with the pack I used to follow, but then they were not hunted by a lady novelist. The master would soon have roared to the huntsman and whippers-in: "Can't you see it's the Woodus girl with her blank pet fox, you blank fools? Call your blank hounds off; this is a hunt, not a blank circus." And anyway hounds would have lost the scent from the moment she picked the fox up.

But the test of realism is out of place in a film like this. And so it is no use asking if a Baptist minister's mother would have knitted on Sunday in 1897 and exuded a classiness more characteristic of the vicarage than of the Nonconformist manse, or if the minister would have dressed like an undertaker seven days a week. The

film, its producers have stated, is a work of art. And it may be so. Certainly there is much to be seen which pleases the eye, including scenery in Shropshire and Wales.

Jennifer Jones has earned commendation for a remarkable performance. That the big part of a Baptist minister on the Welsh border should be played by a fervently Catholic Irishman might not at first sight seem to indicate ideal casting. But that our good friend Cyril Cusack should typify integrity and spiritual values is fitting enough. If he felt, as I did, a certain uncomfortableness in the Baptism scene and the application of the text about "other sheep" to the animal kingdom, the invariable sincerity of his acting enabled him to conceal it. Esmond Knight and Hugh Griffith played character parts most memorably.

Judging by my experience the hounds would have given tongue like anything when suddenly baulked of their prey. But at the end of the film they stood around the hole strangely silent. They seemed a bit perplexed. So did the critics.

Q.

THE WOMAN IN QUESTION

Starring: Jean Kent, Dirk Bogarde, John McCallum, Susan Shaw.
Producer: Teddy Baird. **Director:** Anthony Asquith. G. F. D.
Distribution. *Certificate:* A.
Category: A. *Running time:* 88 minutes.

This film tells of the investigations which followed the discovery of the strangled body of Astra, who had worked as a fortune-teller and added to her earnings through her men friends. The story of her life is unfolded as the Superintendent conducts his examination through a series of flash-backs. This gives Jean Kent a chance of showing a many-sided character; to her charwoman (Hermione Baddeley) she is exquisitely refined, to her sister (Susan Shaw) she is a cruel slut, to the owner of the pet store (Charles Victor) a soft, warm-hearted creature, to the sailor (John McCallum) untrustworthy and insincere, to Bob

Baker (Dirk Bogarde) lazy and sensual.

The story of the friendship of the young and beautiful Astra with the middle-aged Mr. Pollard, whose exacting wife had been bedridden for nine years, is the highlight of the film. The growth of Pollard's infatuation, his lending of money and doing of favours, his fury at being deceived and rejected when he had been promised marriage, is extremely well done.

I enjoyed the film very much because it is the sort of thing that could easily happen. Both characterisation and dialogue ring true to life. The stars give an excellent performance, though Jean Kent oscillates too exclusively between angel and devil. The supporting rôles, especially Lana Morris as a feather brained witness, are played well. Anthony Asquith understands the comedy and tragedy of life, and conveys it admirably through his characters. I found myself wishing he could have had a more noble theme for the display of his great talents.

W.

SENZA PIETA

Starring: Carla del Poggio and Johnny Kitzmuller. **Director:** Alberto Lattuada. *Certificate:* A.
Category: A.

Not all Italian films made in the open air are good cinema or good films. *Senza Pieta*, which has Carla del Poggio to lace a largely local cast, is neither nice to look at nor much of a credit to its country of origin! The story of a street girl who is the occasion of the degradation and death of an American negro soldier has too much racial prejudice about it to be entertaining and is too badly put together to allow our sympathies time to crystallise.

When I saw this film in Venice two years ago, I thought that it would not reach London owing to its anti-American and colour prejudice, but here it is, as large and as unwholesome and as unsatisfactory from the cinematic point of view as ever. Not a film to be added to your collection of Italian or any other kind of films.

V.

CAGE OF GOLD

Starring: Jean Simmons, David Farrar, James Donald, with Herbert Lom, Bernard Lee, Gladys Henson, and introducing Madeleine Lebeau. **Producer:** Sir Michael Balcon. **Assistant Producer:** Michael Relph. **Distributors:** G.F.D. An Ealing Studios Production. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A.

Saddened and revolted by the sugary sentimentality of recent publicity to which this young woman has been subjected, I was mentally unprepared for the considerable dramatic quality of Jean Simmons' work in *Cage of Gold*—which only goes to show that even the vulgarians cannot give a soft edge to an industrial diamond.

The story written for the film by Jack Whittingham is avowedly melodramatic. Therefore highlights and deep shadows are to be expected in plot and characterisation.

An "experienced" Bill Glennon (David Farrar) deliberately revives in Judith (Jean Simmons) a passion for him which had its origin in a painful, unacknowledged, adolescent devotion in the days when he was a Battle of Britain pilot frequenting her father's financially impressive mansion. When the story opens she is a serious young portrait painter loved by a good young doctor, Alan (James Donald). So, with the chance meeting with Bill, which instinct prompts her to avoid, the terms of the melodrama are set: infatuated but nice girl, bad man, good man.

Bad man very quickly marries and deceives nice girl, abandoning her shamefully on the morning after a refreshingly dreary registrar's office wedding. When the newspapers report her husband's death in an air crash, she marries the doctor. But the report of the death is false, and after two years bad man turns up again, suave and with a menacing line in blackmail. She takes a pistol with her when she goes to have it out with him. We see nice girl pointing pistol at bad man and then running down the stairs. The young doctor arrives through the dramatically useful London fog, having been summoned by bad man, who says that "our wife" is in the room with him, with all implications intended.

He sees the distraught Judith stumbling through the fog and hastens to confront Bill. But he finds bad man shot dead and the pistol lying beside him. Under police interrogation both girl and doctor accuse themselves separately of the murder, each thinking the other guilty. But in the end, almost miraculously, it becomes clear to the police that it is Bill's Parisian life which has caught up with him. The murderer is not the nice girl after all, and certainly not the doctor.

This is the story in the simplest terms I can find, but the working out of the plot takes us for considerable lengths of film to Paris, which gives every opportunity of observing the degeneration of a former hero of the Air Force. We see him as a currency smuggler, a racketeer and a blackmailer to whom the affections of women are so much raw material.

The acting is of a high order throughout, and the three principals act inside plot and characterisation. The camera-work seemed, if it be not an impertinence by now to say it of Ealing Studios, really first class. The cutting, besides its dramatic effectiveness, has an economic value, the film on these occasions speaking for itself without words, and more effectively.

X.

A LIFE OF HER OWN

Starring: Lana Turner, Ray Milland, Tom Ewell, Louis Calhern, Ann Dvorak. **Producer:** Voldegar Vetluguin. **Director:** Isabel Lennart. An M.-G.-M. Film. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 108 minutes.

The streets are of beaten gold. The buildings tower in might and splendour, encrusted with gems and precious stones, living with a thousand lives in the strength of the day. And there is heard in those streets, caressed with the fragrance of dreams, the cry of children. They have travelled a weary path, lead on by urgent voices, desire lifting their feet; but they have not found the city of God, they have not found their Father's home. And there is heard in that deceiving city the cry of children.

So Hollywood has discovered that the echo of the human heart is not

comforted by fulfilment of ambition, nor succoured by illicit love.

Lana Turner achieves success as a model. It is an empty triumph. She breaks her heart with love for a married man (Ray Milland), and he, poor cad, does likewise. A glimpse is given of the way out. A desperately inadequate glimpse, but God can use human courage.

It is a slow and painful film for a Catholic to see. Well done, yes, quite well done.

T.

BRIGHT LEAF

Starring: Gary Cooper, Lauren Bacall, Patricia Neal. **Producer:** Henry Blanke. **Director:** Michael Curtiz. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 110 minutes.

In a long course of film-going I do not remember ever having seen anything worse than this. The photography is undistinguished and the characters a nasty, sordid lot, none of whom seem capable of ever acting from decent motives. Brant Royle, the hero (Gary Cooper), is determined to smash Major James Singleton (Donald Crisp), the tobacco king of this part of the world (we are somewhere in America in the year 1894), from motives of revenge, and to marry his daughter Margaret (Patricia Neal). To attain these ends he stops at nothing, not even the betrayal of those who help him in the process. The Major objects to such conduct, as well he may, and expresses his sentiments by an attempt to shoot his rival; when this proves unsuccessful he disgustedly commits suicide. Daughter Margaret thereupon marries Royle and departs with him and a most remarkable amount of luggage for a world tour lasting, we are given to understand, a year, during which she keeps the police informed of her husband's doubtful business deals, thereby gradually ruining the business aforesaid. When taxed with this unwisely conduct she delightedly admits it and tells her husband that she only married him in order to see his face when he found her out. At this taunt Mr. Cooper starts throwing things about and eventually sets the house on fire.

Truly a charming lot of people!

There is, of course, the one good woman, Sonia Kovac (Lauren Bacall), who has loved Royle through the years. But when he marries someone else and consumes, as the film progresses, ever greater quantities of drink (nature unspecified), her love peters out. And who can blame her?

Sordid, unpleasant trash!

T. C. F.

THREE LITTLE WORDS

Starring: Fred Astaire, Red Skelton, Vera-Ellen, with Arlene Dahl, Keenan Wynn, Gloria de Haven. **Producer:** Jack Cummings. **Director:** Richard Thorpe. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. In technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

Et in Arcadia Ego. Even I—in a suit of Etons—have danced to music from the Arcadians. And so I am not prejudiced against the history of popular songs. This film deals with some which belong to the post-Arcadian epoch, by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby, ranging from *Where did you get that girl?* to *Three Little Words*. The former is a product of the vintage of 1919 or thereabouts. The fashions didn't look quite in period to me, but I suppose the costumier is always right.

Compact little Vera-Ellen is a dancing partner not unworthy of the perennial Fred Astaire. Red Skelton gives a performance which satisfies by its vitality. Arlene Dahl is the sort of girl that nice men would whistle at, except that nice men don't whistle at girls.

But the picture is too long for the material available, especially as the music is not up to the standard of Irving Berlin, Gershwin, Kern or Cole Porter.

I must confess at once to an abysmal ignorance of the private lives of Messrs. Kalmar and Ruby, who seem to have had a capacity for mutual estrangement only paralleled by Gilbert and Sullivan. Were their matrimonial affairs as idyllically monogamous as in the film? I hope so. Did they fit with such precision into the accepted pattern of show-business pictures? I wonder.

I need not remind you what the three little words are. It's love that makes

the disc go round. (With acknowledgments to the reader from whom I have borrowed that last crack.) Q.

CONVICTED

Starring: Glenn Ford, Broderick Crawford, Millard Mitchell and Dorothy Malone. **Producer:** Jerry Bresler. **Director:** Henry Levin. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

Ninety-one minutes of screen time equal five years of convict time, gaolod behind bars. Quite long enough too, especially when it's not deserved. Blessed relief in wise crack and dry humours of the convicts, in the benevolence of a humane governor (Broderick Crawford), and in a restrained and not uncharming affair between Glenn Ford, as the falsely convicted, and Dorothy Malone, as the governor's daughter, and a happy ending. Nicely done, maybe, but it's sombre all the same. G.

LET'S DANCE

Starring: Betty Hutton, Fred Astaire, with Roland Young, Ruth Warwick and Lucille Watson. **Director:** Norman McLeod. A Paramount Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 112 minutes.

Film has one great advantage over the stage. It enables every member of the audience to follow with fascinated wonder the intricacies of Fred Astaire's footwork. There is no one to equal him in the fantastic celerity and style of his eccentric dancing. *Let's Dance* is by no means the best of his films, but it makes up for a large number of recent weary imitations of his manner.

Betty Hutton is not his peer in footwork, but in her own department of vocal and physical contortionist she is alone. She is an able foil to Astaire in a number of dances, the most amusing of which is a burlesque of the hard-shootin', hard-drinkin' cowboys.

The story in this kind of film does not matter. It concerns the efforts of a wealthy Society woman to keep her grandchild from the influence of his actress mother. It is harmless

on the whole but, like so many of this species, shows a regrettable contempt for truthfulness. Lies are regarded as a legitimate means to any end. The fact that it is a comedy does not lessen its effect. V.

MY BLUE HEAVEN

Starring: Betty Grable, Dan Dailey, David Wayne, Jane Wyatt and Mitzi Gaynor. **Producer:** Sol C. Siegel. **Director:** Henry Koster. Colour by Technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

My Blue Heaven is a lively musical with some slick dancing and spirited singing of rhythmic rather than tuneless numbers by that competent (incomparable?) pair Betty Grable and Dan Dailey. The fun, however, was spoiled by the mawkish story, which had it not been told delicately would have been positively offensive. It was unsuitable for this kind or any other kind of film. In addition, every member of the female team has to come out leg before the wicket. I suppose there must be a public for this sort of thing, or we would not be getting it. But I hope there is a much larger public, to which readers of *Focus* will belong, who would prefer to have their fun — such very good fun — without lapses into legism. G.

DUCK SOUP

Starring: The Marx Brothers. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A.

This is a re-issue of what is termed their funniest and most original comedy. Perhaps time has staled it, perhaps I am right off the Marx beam. Perhaps it always was a bit tedious anyway. T.

C.F.I. Lectures

The Hon. Secretary has recently lectured to the Sword of the Spirit Group at Southwold on Catholic Film Action, to the C.P.E.A. at Boscombe on Parents and the Cinema and to Catholic Teachers at Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow on the Catholic Approach to the Cinema.

Lectures were also given at St. Peter's College, Cardross, followed by Carl Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*.

Anglican Mass Film

We think it advisable to point out to Convents and other groups which hire films and strips that there is a film strip on the Mass put out by a Church of England film library which is liable to mislead some people into thinking that it portrays the Catholic liturgy. In spite of the beautiful vestments and altar equipment and the faultless movements of celebrant and server, it is a picture of the Anglican Eucharistic service. Only the frames which show the server receiving the chalice at the hands of the "priest" give any indication that it is other than what its title suggests.

Your Film Show

The C.F.I. Projection Unit is available for film shows within the London area. Owing to some misunderstanding on the part of some of our friends, we ought to point out that we are not in a position to offer this service gratuitously. Moderate charges must be made to cover costs and recoup depreciation on our Bell Howell Gaumont 601 projector and films.

Enquiries to Catholic Film Institute, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

Q-RIOUSER AND Q-RIOUSER

In response to a number of requests I have had another nightmare.

I dreamed that I was a producer who had decided to make some films of nursery rhymes. To be sure of a "U" certificate I consulted the censors in advance about one film and received the following reply:

"Dear Rev., Sir or Madam,

"With regard to the proposed film *The Cat and the Fiddle* we must point out that although no objection would be taken in this country to the word 'cat', it must be excluded if you have the American market in mind. Also, we have recently received a communication issued jointly by the Treasury and the Board of Trade recommending that any reference to fiddling should be omitted from films in future as liable to encourage dishonest and unpatriotic behaviour.

"We also regret to inform you that

the synopsis as submitted by you violates the censorship regulations in quite a number of respects. But if you can see your way to amend it as follows, we should consider issuing a 'U' certificate. (We have omitted the opening, viz 'Hey-diddle-diddle,' as it seems to have no meaning and is presumably an error in typing.)

"The domestic pet and the violin.

The girl friend jumped over the moon.

The little gentleman dog laughed to see such sport

And the dish took the spoon out to lunch.

"Yours faithfully,

p.p. DREAMLAND BOARD
OF FILM CENSORS,

(Signed) HONI SOIT.

"P.S.—This board is entirely fictitious and any reference to any actual board is merely malicious."

Q.

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VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

By KATHLEEN ROWLAND

Owing to pressure of work due to the absence of Chairman and Editor in America, it was not possible for the Honorary Secretary to take his part in the work of the O.C.I.C. Jury at Venice this year. Miss Kathleen Rowland, the Universe Film Critic, kindly consented to deputise for him. We are glad to be able to reprint here the account she wrote of the Festival for the Universe. We hope to be able to deal more at length with the O.C.I.C. Prize Film at a later date.

Communist critics attending the Venice Film Festival, misled by the apparently religious titles of many films submitted, protested at this "propaganda". But in spite of the titles—*San Francesco, Give Us This Day, La Prima Comunione, Dieu a Besoin des Hommes, Our Daily Bread, Once a Thief, My Father's House, Hallelujah*—most of them are spiritually superficial, either not intended to be more so or failing in their aim. Of the more significant ones there is a danger in their very success, and their subtleties are liable to misinterpretation by the ill-disposed and the ill-informed.

Dieu a Besoin des Hommes (God Needs Men), the most controversial film shown during the festival, set a problem for both Catholics and Communists. The Catholics have found their solution and the Office Catholique International du Cinema has awarded it their annual prize for the film that most contributes to the spiritual and moral betterment of mankind.

Two days before this award was announced, an Italian Communist newspaper had hailed the film as brilliant, basing its approval on artistic values and on what it interpreted as an anti-clerical exposure. I would have liked to remain in Venice for another two days to see what the Communist comment was on this award that must have disconcerted them as much as it would surprise.

New Rôle

Pierre Fresnay, known and admired here mainly for his superb portrayal of

St. Vincent in the French film *Monsieur Vincent*, is the star of *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes*. His performance in a rôle completely different is as powerful and as sensitive, and although it is by no means a one-man film, he dominates the screen as he did with his interpretation of the saint of charity.

He plays a young fisherman, sacristan of the church on an island off the Brittany coast. It is a tiny, ingrown community that at the time of the film (about 100 years ago) subsists largely on organised murder and looting. Great stacks of smouldering seaweed, built on the shore, would lure ships on to the rocks and the wreckage yielded rich treasure trove to the villagers.

The priest, after appealing and condemning in vain, despairs of converting them and carries out his threat to leave them. Ignorant and hard in their almost primitive isolation, the people yet have a clear and strong sense of the need of a religion with a full sacramental system.

Conflict

They force the sacristan to open the church for them, to lead them in hymn-singing and to preach and they refuse to believe that he has no power to administer the Sacraments. The sacristan is torn between an honesty that compels him to withstand at least the people's pressure to make a travesty of giving absolution and an exultation that glories wonderingly in the mysteries of religion that now seem so strangely close to him.

A murderer trustingly confesses his crime and asks for absolution. A woman whose baby is born in the boat taking her to the mainland, in terror of the pain of death, confesses that her husband is not the child's father and in her agony seizes the sacristan's hand and despite his refusal to give her "absolution", traces the Sign of the Cross on her forehead.

Gradually the sacristan gets a sort of sense of vocation. Painfully, he learns to write in secret, and in the empty

church he goes through the motions of the Mass. He mobilises the whole village into repairing the church roof, torn off in a storm. He will not marry the girl who loves him.

But alone in his realisation of what the true priesthood is, he still has the humility and generosity to try to get a priest for the confused flock. The one he visits is a hard careerist, already comfortable in a mainland parish.

When the Bishop finally sends this same priest to the island, the sacristan shows him how things are in the parish with no resentment at the new pastor's unyielding scorn. When the priest refuses, with undue harshness, to give Christian burial to a suicide, the sacristan is with the people when the whole village goes down to the shore and the fishing fleet puts out to bury the poor wretch at sea, dignified at least with their own passionately sung hymns and an urgently voiced *Ave Maria*. Then they sail back and make for the church and a true Mass once more.

No one disputed that this is a supremely well-made film, but the wisdom of the way in which its message was conveyed was queried. According to God's redemptive plan, sinful man will turn from Him but cannot rest away from Him, and through man's double betrayal and need of Him, He chooses to exercise His Divine mercy.

Astonished

One group of Italian journalists, approaching the film in a severely practical way, looking at it through the lens of contemporary problems, feared that it might be interpreted as an attack on the priesthood or on Catholicism in general. There was even a question that the French would be asked to withdraw it. This would have caused deep offence as they were astonished at the doubts raised and could see no reason for the disquiet.

Eventually a special prologue was written to point out that this is an historical film and not intended to be a reflection on any contemporary state of affairs; doubters were reassured and a brilliant and inspiring film received the praise it deserves.

The Office International Catholique du Cinema qualified its award by

pointing out that none of the films in the festival exactly fitted the purpose of the award, but that for its many excellent qualities *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes* has been chosen. The Grand Jury also gave it a prize.

Of the other films shown at the festival it is difficult to generalise apart from the single, inescapable conclusion that the standard was surprisingly low.

Blank

No British film as such received an award, though the music of *Gone to Earth* won a prize. *Morning Departure*, *The Blue Lamp* and *Seven Days to Noon* were well received and *State Secret* enthusiastically, but its scope as a film aiming solely at straightforward light entertainment was too narrow to allow of consideration for a prize. Lea Padovani won the prize for her performance in *Give Us This Day*.

The startling choice of *The Dancing Years* was a source of embarrassment to the English contingent and of considerable amusement to delegates from every other country. After seeing three incredibly slow, over-acted and one crudely coloured Mexican films, the British raised their heads again.

The Spanish films made heavy going as did the Swedish and German ones, particularly *Epilogue* and *Frauenarzt Dr. Praetorius*.

Disneys

The Americans had sent two charming Disneys, *Cinderella* and *Beaver Valley*, which were awarded. *September Affair* and *Once a Thief* were average. *All the King's Men*, *Caged* and *Asphalt Jungle* ruthless, realistic and dynamic in the manner now adopted so successfully by Hollywood when it is unearthing its own national scandals.

Eleanor Parker got a prize for her performance as a first offender in *Caged* and Sterling Hayden for his study of a quiet, competent and incurable criminal in *Asphalt Jungle*.

As much controversy was raised by the presentation of *Orpheus* in Venice as when it was shown in London, Cocteau apparently having the same effect abroad as on his French co-nationals; one either loathes him or admires him with no reservations.

Justice est Faite, awarded the first prize, was to me a wordy study of mercy-killing, clearly argued and well acted but lacking in dramatic and visual appeal. *La Vie Commence Demain*, an episodic and over-simplified story, showed what sort of Brave New World the leaders of French thought today envisage. *La Ronde*, cynical, heartless, clever and amusing, treated the theme of the round of love with a light Gallic touch that took the offensiveness out of a tricky subject. Of the old French films revived, *Le Jour Se Leve* and *Les Enfants du Paradis* were the most welcome.

From Israel

It was depressing to see modern Swedish productions after watching old Greta Garbo achievements such as *Margherita Gauthier*.

Of two Israeli films, *My Father's House* treated post-war problems in a touching but over-sentimentalised way, whereas *Out of Evil*, with the same integrity, had more power.

The Italians proved again unequalled in human values. How is it that they never lose that warmth no matter whether the theme be trivial or tragic?

Max Ophuls, one of the guest directors in Venice, says the answer is in the Italian people themselves. "Just look around in every street; there are 50 million born actors in Italy; the worst ones go on the stage."

Certainly the delicate acting of the children in *Domani e Troppo Tardi*, a study of adolescent awakening, can never have been surpassed. One of the few comedies, *La Prima Comunione*, got

a runner-up prize, with Aldo Fabrizi (now Italy's most lauded star) as the harassed father who loses his little girl's First Communion dress at the eleventh hour. *Donne Senza Nome*, which received the Selsnick award for the film that contributes most to mutual understanding among the peoples of the world, was to me the most heart-rending film shown at the festival and, indeed, one of the most edifying ever to examine the miseries of war's aftermath.

The horrors depicted of a women's displaced persons' camp are offset by the way in which most of the inmates, not unnaturally saintly, still rise nobly above their personal tragedies so as to help one another in a way that exemplifies practically the brotherhood of man in the fatherhood of God.

One short, unexpectedly delightful Belgian film was *Visite a Picasso*.

Rossellini's much-discussed *Stromboli* left a fashionable public enthusiastic (they had paid a guinea each for their seats and in return, in addition to the film, saw Ingrid Bergman sweep in on Rossellini's arm), but the critics remained cold.

Even the critics, however, seemed predisposed to admire his *San Francesco* and it was with genuine disappointment that most admitted its failure to get near the subject. Visually arresting, it nevertheless was lacking altogether in the spirit of St. Francis, gave no indication of the contemporary world background that had made his extremes necessary and over-simplified to such an extent that he and his monks seemed not childlike but childish.

RETURN TO THE CINEMA

By KATHLEEN CIANTAR

This is the story of why one person stopped going to the cinema and, later, became a film-goer again—this time, a selective one.

Like most schoolchildren, I was a confirmed film-goer from the moment I saw my first film; the chief attraction was the serial. This never failed to hold me enthralled; week by week I suffered agonies over the fate of the heroine, a fate which always came near to death—or worse.

Even when I had outgrown the serial stage, the habit of "flicking" remained and I can remember as an undergraduate averaging two or three shows a week. No doubt psychologists would say that this was expediency and escapism; expediency, because the theatre, which I would have preferred; was more expensive; and escapism, because the group of fellow students with whom I went found the prospect of three hours in a cinema more pleasant

than three hours in a science laboratory—and, naturally, I agreed with them. The strange thing is that I cannot remember a single film of this phase which I didn't enjoy; which means that in our opinion, there were at least 100-150 good films produced each year!

When I came down and lost the constant companionship of my group of fellow-wastrels, I found that the cinema no longer attracted me, *au contraire*, it rather revolted me. The films I saw were so trashy, pseudo-glamorous and often immoral that I didn't notice the occasional good ones. I became ashamed of the fact that this was the type of film that I had previously enjoyed. Maybe it's possible to enjoy even trash in the right company, when one can laugh at rather than with the film—or maybe I am just excusing myself for what was a severe lack of discriminating power!

It wasn't long before I became a complete cine-cynic and refused invitations to the cinema, considering myself rather superior, "No, I never go to films, thank you, they're all so stupid!" I was condescending enough to tolerate the fact that most of my friends still went, but I was glad of the excuse—actually true—that I always developed a headache in that "foul atmosphere".

Then, after wallowing in this self-righteous attitude for five or six years, I was, one evening, enveigled into going to see a film! It was such an unusual event that I can still remember every detail of the evening—the weather, what I wore, the strange feeling of going into the cinema; of course, I was going to see something dreadful—all films were dreadful—in spite of the assurance of my companion who had already seen the film during its London run. It was *Brief Encounter*.

When we eventually emerged into the cold November drizzle and stood waiting for our 'bus, I felt exultant; not the "I-told-you-so" kind, but the "Good-heavens-it-can-be-done" kind. I had actually seen a good film; one with a very real theme, portraying some of the pitfalls which await even the best-intentioned people. It made no pretence of glamour; the heroine, at one point, appeared shopping in the rain wearing a mackintosh and a scarf turban.

I don't want to give a review of this particular film, but I mention it as being, for me, the beginning of sensible—or anyway, more sensible—film-going. Presumably this was not the only good film which had been made.

Since this memorable occasion, I have enjoyed several films: some for their light-hearted fun, wit or humour; some for the talent of the artists; some for the magnificence of the photography; some for the excellent portrayal of a good theme and some for their educational value.

The fact that I have seen no really bad films during this present phase is not due to any vast improvement in the standard of films being made, nor, I hope, to my lack of discrimination, but more to the fact that I now learn something about a film before I see it.

Nowadays, when the cinema is what it is, an enormous power for good or evil, it is surely our duty to society to do what we can to sway the direction of this power towards the good: a most pleasant duty, as it entails enjoying and appreciating one of the finest forms of art.

I have just realised that the Holy Father knows what he's talking about when he says: "The motion picture has achieved these last years a position of universal importance among modern means of diversion." He also says that: "Good motion pictures are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see them". Furthermore he points out that: "It is necessary to influence the production of all films so that they may contain nothing harmful from a religious or moral standpoint", and that there need be no question of merely avoiding what is evil. "The motion picture should not simply be a means of diversion, a light relaxation to occupy an idle hour: with its magnificent power it can, and must, be a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good." Finally, he directs that in each country there be set up "a permanent national reviewing office in order to be able to promote good motion pictures". I suppose that is what the Catholic Film Institute exists for and perhaps we ought to give it more of our support in the work it is doing, to bring about the realisation of the Holy Father's words.

Film Strips for the Teaching of English

By Our Educational Panel

The film strips mentioned below belong to a series produced by Ernest J. Tyler and distributed by Educational Productions Ltd., 17 Denbigh Street, Victoria, London, S.W.1. They are made from the stills of famous films with the permission and co-operation of the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. They are excellent photographs of scenes, incidents and people full of character and vitality. Pictures taken from life have a great advantage over reproductions of other pictures which in some strips differ in style one from another and so present an incongruous representation of a book or play. Each strip is accompanied by notes which consist of extracts from the work pictured as well as an account of events sufficient to give a more or less complete story. Sometimes scenes or chapters are entirely omitted or summarised very briefly without a frame to illustrate them. The editor states emphatically that the strips are not meant to replace, but to illustrate, the literature being read in the school. The ways in which they may be used for English lessons will be suggested as several of the strips are considered briefly.

Hamlet

This strip contains 50 frames of excellent stills from Sir Lawrence Olivier's production of the play. Little more than this need be said about the quality of the pictures which show the magnificent settings of the court scenes and the dresses and features of the actors: they bring the play to life as the film did. The notes are arranged to read as a story or as a play with the dialogue describing each picture set in brackets. The foreword tells which speeches are available on His Master's Voice records. *Hamlet* is not an easy play to teach.

Where it is studied intensively in a VI form or acted in a dramatic society these pictures could form subjects for discussion as well as a convenient revision scheme. But they might be of even greater value with pupils who would not get as far as reading *Hamlet* in class, e.g., in the Modern School. Such pupils would learn the story, hear or read (according to their capacity) the significant passages and this might lead to discussion of some aspects of the problems the play presents. After this there is every hope that they would wish to see the film or a stage representation of the play and be able to enjoy and appreciate it.

Henry V

There are 54 pictures specially printed for the strip from the L. Olivier production of the play. These are supplemented by views of sixteenth century London which give an idea of the city as Shakespeare knew it, and of the situation of the Globe Theatre. These in themselves are valuable for the History teacher or for anyone wishing to place the plays in their context of time and background. The strip is further enhanced by the historical correctness of the dresses, armour and weapons shown. As in *Hamlet* appropriate H.M.V. records are listed; these include the First Chorus, "Once more unto the breach", "Upon the King" and "This is called the feast of Crispin" and several others.

As *Henry V* is a play often taken with middle forms in a Grammar School the pictures of it are likely to prove most useful. They will appeal to boys especially as they show several views of camp life, both grave and gay, and besieged cities, as well as the battle-fields where Welsh bowmen stand in line ready to shoot or horsemen canter across the plains. There are views of

the English and French courts which are historically accurate. The book of words gives a clear, brief version, either by summarising the scene illustrated by the picture or by suggesting the appropriate speech to be read or heard on the gramophone. The strip is in every way a useful adjunct to the study of the play.

Oliver Twist

(45 frames)

The story is given in the notes largely in Dickens' own words. But we not only hear and read of the vile slums of late eighteenth and nineteenth century London, we also visit them in this admirable selection of pictures from the film. A good deal of social history is contained in the early pictures as in the early chapters of the novel: the farming out of young children, life in the Parish Workhouse or in the narrow, sordid streets through which small boys sometimes escape from gaol or live with cruel, inhuman masters have to be seen to be believed. The later scenes are equally realistic and are well chosen to illustrate the story evenly throughout.

Great Expectations

(47 frames)

As in *Oliver Twist* the story is told generally in the words of Dickens. Frequently these novels are heavy going for children on account of their length and language used. By first showing a strip of *Great Expectations* the teacher would be certain to arouse interest: the "fearful man all in coarse grey with a great iron on his leg" shown in the second frame would set the story going. Miss Havisham's house, breakfast room and garden are full of suggestions, as are the London scenes later. The river, prison and criminal court arouse very different feelings but by now the children's interest in the characters should support them through these scenes. Appropriate passages might be read as the pictures are shown, but perhaps a better way might be to run through all the pictures with comments by the teacher and children before beginning to read the extracts. Subjects like the making of a gentleman and vicissitudes of Pip's fortunes and love might be gathered from the

pictures and woven into a story in the children's words, after which the extracts or the whole book could be read with more appreciation of Dickens' art and power.

Treasure Island

(45 frames)

The photographs are reproduced by permission of R.K.O.-Walt Disney Productions Ltd. R.L.S.'s vivid descriptions spring to life for quite young children as they see these excellent pictures. The early frames of the Admiral Benbow and the queer customers who gather there, and the streets of Bristol are followed by graphic scenes at sea, the "Hispaniola" with her sails and the murderous seamen, and lastly very good shots of the island with tropical vegetation, the stockade and the pre-historic looking Ben Gunn. The end of the story is not clear from the pictures as it is not meant to replace, only to augment, the book. It is a strip well worth adding to any collection of school film strips.

It may be useful to summarise the advantages to the teacher from the use of these film strips:

1. They recall the film and show what makes a good film. Thus they provide material for discussion on technique. They re-capture what passes so quickly in the film.
2. They make a valuable revision of the play or novel by letting the children see and hear the chief scenes. They bring the ends together, shorten, and so help them to grasp the work as a whole.
3. It might be possible to use them as a welcome variation on context questions. For example, if the scene showing the Artful Dodger leading Oliver to Fagin's den were put on the screen the children could describe the event and say where it comes in the story. The events between two pictures could be given as written exercises: the significance of a picture with respect to the whole play could be asked for: speeches suitable to appearance and gesture of a character could be given. And many other useful exercises will certainly suggest themselves as the strips are used.

SHORT NOTICES

Religious Film Strips

Low Mass

By John Gillick, S.J. 80 pictures (double frame) 12s. 6d. Obtainable from: The Film Strip Secretary, Heythrop College, Chipping Norton, Oxon.

A really excellent strip—outstanding in value from every point of view. Many of the photographs are those which appear in the book "The Breaking of Bread", by Father Coventry.

Lourdes

B.I.F., No. 184. 36 frames. Price 10s. Obtainable from British Instructional Films, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.

Good photographs of the town, of places connected with St. Bernadette and of typical incidents which occur in the course of a pilgrimage make this a useful strip. Does not attempt to be "devotional", but arouses interest.

N.B.—Both these strips will be reviewed in full in the next issue.

Next month's article: "History: Films and Strips".

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Brickbats and Bouquets

Sir,

I wonder why your correspondent, D. B. Wallace, should assume that brickbats constitute the larger part of our postbag? His welcome compliment however, is none the less acceptable for having this back-handed completion! As Secretary of the C.F.I., I can assure him that most of our letters are complimentary ones, but we prefer to publish the brickbats when they are reasonable on the grounds that only good can come from the honest expression of contrary points of view. We welcome all criticism and do our best to benefit by it.

The only criticisms we are inclined to resent are those which are merely

destructive and give us no credit for the thought and labour which is, in fact, behind all our efforts.

J. A. V. BURKE.

Subject for a Catholic Film

Sir,

... I could not help comparing it (*The Wooden Horse*) with the Jesuit Father Gerard's escape from the Tower. He has left us the thrilling story in his own words and a new edition of this autobiography is soon to appear. Treated as deftly as *The Wooden Horse*, what a wonderful film it would make. What a subject for a Catholic production unit!

J. R. WINGFIELD-DIGBY, S.J.

Cover Personality

JAMES
DONALD

Readers sometimes write to express astonishment that, as FOCUS is the organ of the Catholic Film Institute, not all the personalities featured on our cover are Catholics. There is no particular reason why they should be. Though we are delighted to learn that such and such an actor or actress is a member of the Church our primary object in mentioning them is to let our readers know that we think our cover personalities are contributing something valuable to the art and craft of Cinema.

It would be easy but, we think, not very constructive, to copy the policy of the "fan magazines" and show glamorous blondes and crinkly-haired Tarzans. We still think that our readers, in the main, wish to be informed about films, not to use them as potential wall-coverings or dope for day-dreaming.

This month we introduce an actor whom we consider to be one of the most promising of the younger British group who are demonstrating that, given reasonable stories, imaginative camera-work, adequate direction and a proper understanding of the British ethos as well as the power to express it in cinematic terms, there is no reason why international critics should not acclaim the British school of film as they do the French or Italian or Swedish.

James Donald, who was born in Aberdeen, studied under the famous Michel St. Denis, the brilliant French producer, at the London Theatre Studio. His career at Edinburgh University gave him that poise and polish which is the characteristic of so many of the best British actors. The Old Vic, too, had its part in forming him as it has formed so many other distinguished members of the stage. That in addition to tours in Noel Coward plays, provided

the all-round ability for character portrayal which marks the competent stage actor as contrasted with the girl or boy who comes to the film-studio on the strength of a beauty competition or the fact of a successful career in advertising hair cream. The latter tyros may, in fact, develop into efficient actors, but the chances are against them, whereas the actor who has gone through the mill of stage training with first-class players always has something worthwhile to show the director of films.

James Donald entered films in 1942 in *In Which We Serve*. This was followed by *Went The Day Well* and *San Demetrio*, both produced by Ealing Studios and both films in which the careful casting and excellent team-work militated against any particular actor being featured where all were so good. This was also the case, to some extent, with *The Way Ahead*, directed by Carol Reed, on which our Reviewer said: "The film is a triumph of good team-work and, at the close, you feel that between the actors, honours are even."

Service in H.M. Forces and periods of stage work hyphenated James Donald's next films. *Broken Journey*, in 1948, was his first featured rôle and confirmed the judgment of some discerning critics that given a credible part (which was not the case in *Broken Journey*) he could rise to the heights. The opportunity was, in some measure, provided by *The Small Voice* in which, with Valerie Hobson, he turned in a very pleasing study of a husband on the verge of making shipwreck of his marriage. His latest film, *Cage of Gold*, strengthens our opinion about an intelligent actor who is capable of the best, if it be offered him.

JOHN VINCENT.

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A FILM REVIEW



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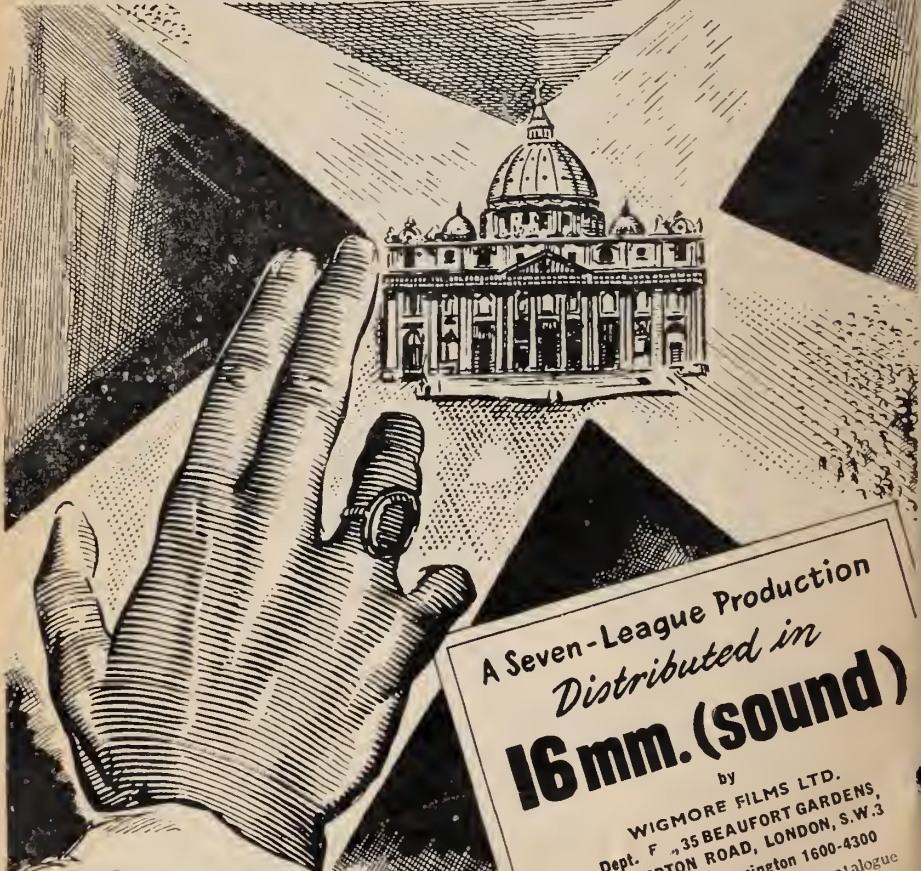


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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. III

DECEMBER 1950

No. 12

The Spirit of Christmas

THE spirit of Christmas is enshrined in Our Lady's magnificent which is a song of gratitude, joy and exultation. Christmas is, therefore, an appropriate time to express my gratitude to all readers of *Focus* for their kindness, co-operation, support and sympathy during the past year.

It is the people who read this publication who are the important people. You can get an Editor any time. It is not so easy to find a public. Anyone who has had experience in a publishing business is aware that the public can kill or crown a publication. The letters of goodwill and constructive criticism which we receive from various parts of the world lead us to believe that *Focus* will live to a ripe (and we hope wise) old age.

At this joyful season (although it is very cold) I take off every hat I possess to our reviewers who are a most considerate and gentlemanly body of men. The reviewers are the life blood of *Focus*. I wish A., B., C., V., Q., and all the rest of them, a very Happy Christmas

and much wit and wisdom in the year to come. It would be an impertinence to offer any sort of thanks to our Manager for we both paddle the same canoe; but I give her a special Christmas salute. I also wish to express my gratitude to the many people who have written for *Focus* during the past year and I want to say that every encouragement is given to new writers who have something to say about the cinema. My best wishes also to the committee of the Catholic Film Institute, most especially to our Reverend Chairman who has to bear the heat and the burden of the years.

Christmas is the feast of Truth . . . "And the WORD was made flesh and dwelt amongst us". Truth is the revealed word of God and God's word must be the last word on any subject. To tell the Truth is the most important thing in the world. *Focus* endeavours to spread the light and the music of Truth through the light and the sound of the cinema. In this sense Christmas has a special significance for members of the film Apostolate.

EDITOR.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

No. 11—FILM MUSIC

One may listen to music consciously, as at a concert, or unconsciously when it provides what has become known as "background" for a film. In the former case, all one's attention is given to the music; in the latter, the music plays a secondary part to the scenes we are watching, and if it has been sensitively scored and recorded we may well remain unconscious of having heard it at all. Sometimes, background music is so loud it dominates a film and distracts attention from the visual and/or verbal narration, but one should blame the recorder, not the music.

The discovery that music brings films to life and heightens their dramatic values was made in the days of the silent film, when cinemas employed orchestras as in theatres, and entire programmes were scored with suitable music. In London's leading cinemas surprisingly large orchestras were resident, and music was specially composed to accompany films, the orchestral parts being sent out with copies of the films when the subjects were generally released. To view a silent or even a talking film before music has been added is known as seeing it "cold". Music warms up a film in an astonishing way.

Equally astonishing is the fact that it rarely seems out of place. For instance, we well know that orchestras are not usually to be found on mountain tops, in coal mines or playing during a surgical operation, and yet when music accompanies such scenes on the

screen it becomes an integral part of the film and, though we may not realise it, is giving dramatic emphasis to the sequences.

Disney's cartoons have always exemplified the supreme importance of music in film. Here indeed is a *universal* language. The combining of music with film reached great heights at the peak of silent film presentation, and then it was ousted by dialogue, but not for long. It crept back, first in musical and vocal films, spectacular dance shows, and so on, and later in background form, which I have described. However, it is only in recent years that certain producers have found in music wedded to film a new language capable of lifting the medium out of the national mould into which it has become wedged. Ambitious features made in this country have employed specially composed or adapted music as never before, in such subjects as *The Red Shoes* and, due shortly, *Tales of Hoffmann*, in which music can be said to provide the actual foundations upon which the film is constructed.

Until one has wrestled with film, spending hours cutting and editing visuals, it is difficult to realise the extent to which a sound track full of dialogue restricts and governs the flow of visuals, whereas scenes containing a minimum of human speech can be freely assembled to create maximum pictorial values, and when music is added to the result, film truly flowers.

FOCUS INDEX

A complete index of FOCUS: A Film Review, Vols. I and II, is now available. Copies may be obtained from the Manager, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7, on receipt of stamps to the value of 1½d.

A Positive Approach to the Cinema

No. 5

THE FILM AND ENNUI

By J. J. CURLE

The more civilised a nation is, the more things its members must not do. That is unfortunately the essence of modern civilisation. The rules may not, in many cases, be codified, but they are none the less absolute and their infringement always brings censure or some form of social punishment. The savage, on the other hand, is comparatively free in the sense that, though he has only a limited horizon, the sanctions on his conduct are mainly ones which he can observe without too fierce repression of his natural instincts.

Art is, to a great extent, the civilised man's answer to this limitation on his freedom. He wishes to escape to a world where the logic of the mind or the heart can be followed unhindered from its premises to its conclusions. If this path is artificially bent, or straightened so as to arrive at easily appreciated conclusions which do not genuinely follow from the premises used, such art is called escapist—but all art is in essence an escape. Art is an attempt to condense experience into a form in which inessentials are pared away and the central core of meaning alone remains. It is, in fact, a means of short-circuiting irrelevance, chaos and all the inadequacy and frustration of everyday human life. But this escape is not negative in its effects. It is a stimulant and by its aid we break out, not from life into dreams, but from the prison of the walled-off ego into life. Through the arts we learn to see and hear and feel over a wider range and with sharpened faculties to penetrate deeper into the amazing variety of life and our own consciousness.

With bad or dishonest art, however, the core is lacking, and the paring away of detail reveals not riches but poverty. In a book whose action does not spring

from character no complete feeling of identification arises between the author's creations and the reader. The intelligent find such a book "unreal" because it lacks this central integrity, while to the less intelligent it is unreal as experience by the mere fact of being a book—of imposing itself on them through print from an external object held in the hand and therefore "separate". In painting and music bad art has the same effect. For the intelligent it betrays, whether they can pin-point it or not, a lack of some central core of unity, while to the unintelligent or unperceptive, all painting and music are external experiences with only literary or descriptive, not personal meanings. That is to say the listener to music, the viewer of paintings or the reader of books do not expect to *live* at the pitch of what they see or hear or read. Therefore, if what they choose is weak, it is a weakness they inspect rather than a weakness which inhabits them.

But the cinema has found a way to penetrate the unintelligent and the unperceptive so that it is no longer, like the other arts, objective—an alternative to life, but subjective—life itself. This it does by the use of four means. It presents itself in a dark place; it presents itself in a large size; it uses emotional rhythm both in its cutting and its accompanying music, and it bases itself on living detail. Darkness rules out everything except the viewer and the screen and cancels the distance between them, thus establishing a relationship which, while still objective, is almost as close as that of the foetus to the womb. The large size of the picture and the rhythmic cradling of its sound accompaniment and composition create a hypnotic effect in which the viewer slides imperceptively from objective to

subjective participation. And the air of reality outside of which the self starts to doubt the evidence of its senses is maintained by the "realism" of the detail which corresponds to what the lower self accepts as life. When therefore the film lies about life it does not put a lie before the viewer but inside him. When it makes a false simplification it makes the mind of the lazy accept that falsity as truth. The parts—the details—have registered on the mind as true to experience, therefore the conclusion—the sum of the parts—must also be true and experience, if correctly divined, must be this conclusion.

But the film, even if bad art, is still art and therefore a condensation, showing no parallel to all the less important hours of which our life is mainly composed. Therefore, if the film is our subjective standard life, these in-between hours are not life at all but only the evidence of our incomprehension or of some objective hindrance which prevents us having a truly rich existence. The more the film tends to become the standard the more its "subjects" become dissatisfied with their normal existences discounting their in-between hours, using them only for dreams not for action.

Thus there is gradually produced in large sections of the population a drug

effect in which thought (which respects passivity) is discounted and even action becomes merely its own sensations robbed of their purposes. As with all drugs the dose has to be steadily increased to remain effective—and at a certain point it ceases to be effective. The final result is then a permanent ennui or desolation in which life is found to be unreal by the standard of film life and therefore not worth living, while the film life is found to be unreal and therefore unobtainable.

There is no glib answer that one can give to the problem of what is to be done about this tragic progression. Theoretically the circle can be broken into either by giving a better education to the public which will lead to a demand for better films, or by making better films and thus leading to the improvement of taste. But the film being primarily a commercial proposition and the product of many talents, few of which are artistic, these alternatives provide only Utopian or at any rate very long-term answers. There is another possible answer that has been tried before and may hold the key, and that is to retreat from naturalism, to take the film with its unrivalled fluidity out of the realm of actuality and into the realm of reality. But there, I don't suppose that would be box-office—though there was *Hamlet*.

Sub-Standard Service

If you have a problem connected with 16mm. projector or camera work, send it along to Sub-Standard Service, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7. If an immediate reply is required, send stamped, addressed envelope. Questions will be answered in a subsequent issue of FOCUS.

Q. I have in my possession an Amprosound 16mm. Projector. The picture is excellent, very clear and a pleasure to look at. The trouble is with the sound. The sound system works by excited lamp, then transmitted to the amplifier. Lately someone has tampered with the exciter lamp lens and it has lost, as a consequence, all the sharpness of the sound . . . My difficulty is how can I know how to set the lens properly, and

is there any instrument or special film to test the exact sound as regards clarity and sharpness?

I have ordered a lens from America, but Malta is a sterling country and we cannot pay dollars. In case I cannot obtain such a lens from America, could I find the agents of the Ampro machines in England, and could they supply me with such a lens?

REV. LEWIS DARMANIN, O.P., Malta.

A. For maximum efficiency of sound the exciter optical system should be set at 5,000 cycles. The agents for the Amprosound Projector in this country are Messrs. Simplex-Ampro Ltd., 167/169 Wardour Street, London, W.1. They are well stocked with spares, and can send any parts required immediately.

FILM REVIEWS

By Our Panel of Priests

TWO FLAGS WEST

Starring: Joseph Cotten, Linda Darnell, Jeff Chandler, Cornel Wilde, with Dale Robertson, Jay C. Flippen, Noah Beery, Harry von Zell, John Sands, Arthur Hunnicutt. **Producer:** Carey Robinson. **Director:** Robert Wise. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 92 minutes.

Scene: Obscure fort on U.S.A. frontier.

Time: Last year of American Civil war.

Background music: Dixie, generally played slowly and in minor key. (See "Time" above.)

General idea: Confederate prisoners-of-war are released in order to help fight Indians (Red).

Nice men: Joseph Cotten and Cornel Wilde, one from South and the other from North, but both regular Americans.

Nasty man: Jeff Chandler. But he does lay down his life for the others.

Glamour: Linda Darnell in smart Yankee uniform with riding skirt. Widow of the Nasty man's (see above) brother. Her brother-in-law "likes to have her around". But he "makes her feel unclean".

Very nasty men when wantonly provoked: Indians (Red) *ad lib*.

Worth seeing (as always): Covered wagons, wide open spaces and galloping horses.

Special feature: Long and bloody battle. Fire and slaughter and how. Too realistic for Category "C". But normal bloodthirsty schoolboy will revel in every minute of it. Can't help feeling that whoever gave "U" certificate must have a boy of his own. When nasty man (see above) leaves

fort to give himself up to Indians (Red) be prepared for bloodcurdling whoop from latter, or you may jump right out of your seat like lady in front of me.

Spiritual Bouquet: Very happy Christmas to all kind readers from Q.

MR. MUSIC

Starring: Bing Crosby, Nancy Olson, Charles Coburn, with Robert Stack, Tom Ewell, Charles Kemper, Marge and Gower Champion. **Producer:** Robert L. Welch. **Director:** Richard Haydn. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 114 minutes.

You have all heard the sounds emitted by Bing. Have you ever speculated as to their origin? This film begins by letting us in on the secret. They first happen when he is asleep.

Mr. Music is the title of a play which takes a lot of composing. But a secretary, whose devotion to duty obliges her to live in and whose sense of propriety requires that a comic aunt should live in too, and several guest artists for the opening night insure that the show eventually goes on. One of the guest artists is Groucho Marx. It is perhaps unfortunate that the only vulgar moment in the film, which he provides, should also be the most cleverly funny.

If you think that the children won't be bored by nearly two hours fictional demonstration of how song composers work and don't work, there is no reason why you should not take them. The only harm the film could do would be to put romantic ideas into the heads of stenographers.



Portuguese children fulfil Our Lady's request

PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA

A Catholic Film Institute Production

IT is the film critic's job (and responsibility) to find out what a film is trying to say, then to judge whether what is being said is good, bad or indifferent. What is being said, the doctrine which informs a film, is the most important part of a film. But, the manner in which ideas are expressed is important too; it is part of the critic's duty to determine whether the ideas in the film have been expressed in the best possible manner.

(I)

THE SOUL OF THE FILM

In the film under review we see cinema being used for the noblest of

purposes: to record and spread the amazing facts of the supernatural appearances of Our Lady at Fatima. If the facts of Fatima are true, and we know that they are true, they should be shouted from the house-tops; every medium of spreading ideas should be used to inform the world that in our time God has spoken through His mother, who has revealed to us a way of peace. It is fitting that the cinema which is the most popular medium of reaching the masses should be used to help the world to understand Our Lady's message. Those who have made this film have done something worth while.



... the vision



... the miracle of the sun

No false emphasis has been used in presenting the facts. The film works up to a climax in such manner that we are persuaded that the one weapon which will destroy Communism which is endeavouring to destroy Christianity is . . . **The Rosary**. The soul of this film is wholesome. To a mad world it teaches a sane philosophy.

(II)

ITS MANNER OF EXPRESSION

There are some lovely and moving moments in this film; nevertheless I do not think that it has been presented in the best technical and artistic manner.

The film's good points. There is a quality about the acting of the child who plays Lucia in the introductory mime which is surprising and most pleasing. The sequence in which we see the pilgrims waving goodbye to Our Lady is both picturesque and moving (this is a fine piece of film reporting). The script is dignified, it at no time surmounts the visuals. Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., the commentator, sounds like a man, you can hear what he is saying, he has a rich, round, resonant voice and he speaks with an obvious, but un-self-conscious sincerity. The photography is very good.

Its weak points. It seems to me that the creators of this film worked with-

out a shooting-script, which is like trying to build a house without a clear clean-cut plan. Better planning would have given us better editing and there would have been less wastage of celluloid.

It was a nice idea to ask His Lordship Bishop Craven to introduce the film; but he does more than introduce it, he becomes a major character in the film. Three minutes on the screen would have been adequate for His Lordship, then Fr. Hilary should have taken over and the mime, which was a good find, should not have been allowed to suffer interruptions. I also think that boys should have been used to play the male parts in the mime if only for the sake of credibility.

CONCLUSION

In spite of some obvious technical and artistic weaknesses this is a good and an important film. What I said about it after I first saw it some months ago I say again . . . "In a world grown musty and morbid with materialism this supernatural story is like a breath of sweet clean fresh air".

Already *Pilgrimage to Fatima* has made its appeal to many people's hearts. And when all is said and done, man's heart is more important than art.

DECLAN FLYNN, O.F.M.



Charlie meets a millionaire (Harry Myers)

CITY LIGHTS

Starring: Charles Chaplin, Virginia Cherill, Harry Myers, Allan Garcia and Hank Mann. **Written,** Directed and Produced by Charles Chaplin. **Distributors:** United Artists. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

Chaplin devised this film as "a comedy romance in pantomime". Resisting the challenge of the talkies, he deliberately set about making a silent picture, convinced that pantomime was universal and better suited to his style. The few captions that are necessary to help the story are brief and to the point.

Looking at it again after 20 years one is struck by the fact that though filmically it is unadventurous and asks no more of the camera than to register his antics, the old magic of the screen's greatest clown is still powerful and

easily survives the competition of the modern microphonic school.

It will be interesting to note the effect of the film on those youngsters who have never seen a vintage Chaplin. Before the film was halfway through, the press show was a gathering of giggling and roaring Chaplin fans.

The story is basically sentimental and tells of the love of a tramp for a blind flower-girl, who is eventually cured as a result of the tramp's efforts to earn money for the purpose. She does not recognise her benefactor in the tattered being to whom she offers a coin.

The comedy is a clever mixture of slapstick and satire and the traditional pathos of the clown who gets slapped. There is the vulgarity at certain points inevitably associated with a film by Chaplin, but it is never of such a nature as to make the film morally objectionable. In any case it seems to me that the essence of true Chaplin situations is such as to be fully appreciated only by alert adults. V.

TREASON

Starring: Paul Kelly, Bonita Granville, Richard Derr and Charles Bickford. **Director:** Felix Feist. **Distributors:** Monarch Film Corporation. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

This film was made with the object of trying to inform the general public of the truth behind the "trial" of Cardinal Mindszenty. Considerable efforts were made by interested parties to have the film suppressed. It is to the credit of the producers, a group of Jewish and non-Catholic Christians that

the script was eventually made into a moving picture.

It is entirely without "frills" and deals factually with the arrest and trial of the Cardinal and the methods used to try to discredit him in the eyes of the world.

Charles Bickford gives a quiet but forceful study of the Cardinal. Paul Kelly as an Ulster-born American journalist gives a competent picture of the newspaperman who thinks that "liberty is everybody's business" and tries to unravel the secrets behind the facade offered to the public. Bonita Granville as a Jewish schoolteacher who resists the attempts to Sovietise her country, makes up the third of the denominational characters required to give the film the broad appeal it is intended to have.

V.



Cardinal Mindszenty (Charles Bickford) is arrested for treason

THE ELUSIVE PIMPERNEL

Starring: David Niven and Margaret Leighton, with Jack Hawkins, Cyril Cusack, Robert Coote.
Producers and Directors: Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.
Distributors: British Lion. In technicolor. *Certificate:* U.
Category: B. *Running time:* 109 minutes.

We are told that it is from a romance by Baroness Orczy, and the operative word is "from". There is, of course, nothing sacrosanct about the works of the late authoress in question, but in Sir Percy Blakeney what she gave to our English myth was a romantic figure who cloaks his heroism under an affectation of inanity which, however, never lapses from dignity. The Pimpernel of a few years back, with Leslie Howard in the title rôle, preserves this air of dignity.

In this version by Powell and Pressburger we have a very different conception. The Pimpernel of David Niven brings in a new mixture in the style of Bob Hope (wisecracks) and Douglas Fairbanks, senior (swinging acrobatics). Admittedly it is all very amusing as well as thrilling, unless you have some degree of nostalgia, not so much for the Orczian Pimpernel, but for the age at which you were able to glow with simple-hearted admiration for the admirable English nobleman triumphing over French revolutionaries far from admirable. It was a happy excess of one Englishman being a match for ten Frenchmen and of knavish tricks confounded. As a child will suffer no deviation in the unfolding of a familiar tale, so I like my Pimpernel according to the book—just as I stand by *Dream Days* and *The Golden Age*.

Other comparisons with the Howard film are inevitable. I seem to remember Merle Oberon's Lady Blakeney as more animated than this one of Margaret Leighton. Cyril Cusack, with perfect timing of word and gesture, gives a performance which does not suffer by comparison with Raymond Massey's mastery of the part of the sinister Chauvelin. Whoever seeks to portray the Prince Regent in

future will have the interpretation of Jack Hawkins to haunt him either into imitation or difficult avoidance.

The outdoor scenes, both in France and at Bath, England, are very pleasing. For one who is ever delighted by the Palladian magnificence of Prior Park, it was a memorable moment when one recognised the colonnaded terrace, looking down again at the fairy setting of the temple. The studio sets are not always quite convincing, particularly that of the sequence reminiscent of the Colonel Blimp film. You will know the one I mean when you see the film, as you almost certainly will.

X.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

Starring: Jane Wyman, Kirk Douglas, Gertrude Lawrence, Arthur Kennedy. **Producers:** Jerry Wald and Charles K. Feldman.
Director: Irving Rapper.
Distributors: Warner Brothers.
Certificate: U. *Category:* B.
Running time: 110 minutes.

Besides first-rate acting by the stars, both individually and as a team, there is a welcome quality about this film for which I cannot find the exact name; perhaps "humanity" is the nearest word. The mother who has come down in the world, with her everlasting reminiscences of her girlhood in a southern State, of high society and suitors galore, with her nagging, her semi-medical claptrap, her pretentious stupidity and exasperating repetitions, is a dreadful and ridiculous woman. No wonder her husband walked out one day and never came back. No wonder her son is always answering back and her crippled daughter, whose hobby is collecting glass animals, does not find her easy to confide in.

Yet all the time Gertrude Lawrence makes us feel that she is really devoted to her children. And for all their bickering there is a real bond of affection between the three remaining members of the family. They are all likeable people, even the mother. And when in answer to her prayers a "gentleman caller" at last materialises to take some interest in lame Laura, he



... Jane Wyman
scores another
success in a
character study of
an unusual, shy girl
called Laura



too is essentially likeable, for all his gum-chewing, bumptious normality.

The theme of a shy, unusual girl being "brought out" by the kindly interest of a man is obvious enough. But here it is developed with exceptional skill. In the dance hall particularly, words — and silences — acting, facial expressions, the way the camera is used, even the particular tune played by the band, combine to produce a sequence which is very good indeed. Just before and after the moment when Laura says: "The smoke has got into my eyes", my sentiment - resistance, hardened though it is against frequent crude onslaughts in the cinema, gave way completely and it wasn't smoke that was in my eyes. Perhaps this was

intensified by the fact that I anticipated the girl's subsequent disappointment.

The film notably weakens itself by its final hint of a conventionally happy ending in the more remote future. For the "gentleman caller" was actually someone whom Laura had previously known and secretly cared for and I do not believe that a girl of her type would have transferred her affection. To some who have nothing but "the pictures" to provide them with a philosophy of life this film may be of real value. But whereas "lame dogs" and "ugly ducklings" are rightly encouraged to hope for real happiness even in this life, it is wiser and less deceptive not to identify it necessarily with "meeting somebody else".

HARRIET CRAIG

Starring: Joan Crawford, Wendell Corey. **Producer:** William Dozier.

Director: Vincent Sherman. A Columbia Picture. *Certificate: A.*

Category: A. Running time: 94 minutes.

This film, which is a rather obvious adaptation of a play, is a character study rather than a story. Nothing very much happens, but one is introduced to people whose traits and reactions are of absorbing interest. The central figure is Harriet Craig (Joan Crawford) who is an attractive, masterful, possessive and selfish woman, who in spite of getting everything she wants is a miserable woman indeed. Reared in impoverished circumstances, she has, by force of personality, charm, and an iron will, obtained wealth, a beautiful home and

the love of a husband who is understanding and kindly. She has got all she wants — except happiness. Her relentless pursuit of self estranges her from all her devoted friends, and finally even from her husband (Wendell Corey). Money, luxury, power bring her no peace, and eventually confine her in the narrow cage of a hell of loneliness.

Do not think, however, that because this could be called a sermon in film on the text: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," it is mere moralising, and therefore not worth seeing. On the contrary it is a most fascinating study of real life. Harriet's character is not an exaggeration. She can be found, only too often, where wealth abounds and where wives are deliberately childless. Her pursuit of self makes her ugly, lonely and

Scenes from "Harriet Craig"





go on no longer—until, being thwarted, she perpetrates injustices too gross to be borne.

This is a film to be seen, not only because of its salutary content, but because it is quite superbly acted.

G.

MACADAM

Starring: Françoise Rosay, Paul Meurisse, Simone Signoret and Andrée Clement. **Director:** Marcel Blistene. Supervised by Jacques Feyder. **Distributors:** Film Traders, Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A.

If your taste is for thieves' kitchens in Montmartre, in which crime is suitably punished and virtue not very satisfactorily rewarded *Macadam* may be worth a visit. Françoise Rosay lends distinction even to crime, and it is interesting to watch her faithful interpretation of the mind and environment of character.

She is the mistress of a shabby hotel which is the centre for all manner of illegal transaction and clientèle. Only her daughter (Andrée Clement) feels out of place and longs for a moral life. The plot is worked out with finesse and that observation of psychological detail which makes most French films so much more actual than the glossier products of other lands.

V.

GIRL OF THE YEAR

Starring: Robert Cummings, Joan Caulfield, Elsa Lanchester, Melville Cooper. **Producer:** Nat Perrin. **Director:** Henry Levin. Presented by Columbia Pictures in technicolor. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

Joan Caulfield abandons her career as teacher in an old fashioned college for the sake of life with real people, i.e., night clubs, etc. Robert Cummings gives up artistic painting in order to concentrate on sketching partially dressed glamour girls. Any comment? No.

T.

wretched. Has self-seeking ever done otherwise?

Nor is this film just a one man—or rather a one woman—show. All the characters are worthy of close attention, and their personalities are shown up in their reactions to and their contrast with the dominant figure. Mrs. Frazier (Fiona O'Shiel), as a gentle, thoughtful young widow, is a happy and balanced person who has learned to bear trouble with grace and poise. Mrs. Harold (Viola Roache) is a woman of dignity who patiently bears with the unreasonableness and injustice of her mistress. Clare (K. T. Stevens), Harriet's niece, is a decent straight-forward girl who is always generously eager to help. And Mr. Craig is a really devoted husband who does everything possible to make his wife happy. Their patient and long suffering service of Harriet goes on until it can

THE MUDLARK

Starring: Irene Dunne, Alec Guinness and Andrew Ray, with Beatrice Campbell, Finlay Currie, Anthony Steel and Raymond Lovell.
Director: Jean Negulesco. A 20th Century-Fox film. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 98 minutes.

The fact that Irene Dunne is an American should have no part in swaying one's judgment of the quality of her performance as Queen Victoria. After all, it was an Englishman, Alexander Knox, who was chosen for the rôle of President Wilson. If, therefore, I say I was disappointed with Miss Dunne's portrayal, it is purely because I think she was miscast. About her competence there can be no question; she is a superb actress. The screen, however, makes visual demands which the stage cannot, and in the case of an almost contemporary figure such as the Queen, so well-known to many living people as well as being familiar through portraiture to everybody in the country, the cinema audience is apt to lose the illusion of actuality if the central figure is as unlike the veritable personage as Irene Dunne is unlike Queen Victoria. She is too naturally charming, her features too refined to allow us to accept her easily as the dumpy, petulant-looking, rather unattractive lady who gave her name to the last century. On the stage, yes; Miss Dunne would have got away with it. The screen could not disguise her self-conscious movements and expression or the unnaturally stilted tones which the uncomfortable make-up doubtless had much to answer for.

The story of the little mudlark whose affection-starved soul sought satisfaction in seeing the motherly-

looking lady whose medallion had come into his possession lends itself admirably to film treatment. The various episodes which make up this lad's pilgrimage from the muddy flats of the Thames around Wapping to the noble castle on the Thames at Windsor to see the Queen are unusually well-balanced in a neat script by Nunnally Johnson from the book by the American Catholic novelist Theodore Bonnet. It is a tribute to the film to say that, written by a man who has never seen England, scripted, directed and the principal parts acted by Americans, it yet conveys the authentic "feel" of Victorian London in spite of the rather too-pervasive fog.

Alec Guinness as Disraeli gives one of the finest performances of his career. His physical resemblance to the man is uncanny. His psychological grasp of the character lends the physical likeness complete authority. His speech in the House of Commons, a 6 or 8 minute uninterrupted "take", is one of the great moments of film acting.

Andrew Ray, the eleven-year-old son of Ted Ray, was a fortunate choice for the title rôle. His perky, frail, insouciant Cockney is just right. The director must have found him a willing co-operator. In so far as a little boy can really be expected to act naturally Andrew Ray was that boy. Being the son of his father he may be expected to appear on the screen again. That is a pity. He has established himself as the Mudlark and we shall always see that pathetic little face looking for his Queen, whatever other rôle he may play.

A film to see and enjoy.



The Queen (Irene Dunne) is not amused



ec Guinness as
Disraeli

THE DAUGHTER OF ROSIE O'GRADY

Starring: June Haver, Gordon MacRae, with Gene Nelson, James Barton, Cuddles Sakall.
Director: David Butler. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers. In technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 107 minutes.

Here are excellent acrobatic dancing, good stage dancing and singing. Also old fashionedness, stage Irishmen and all that. As each glimpse of the obvious was obviously impending, an elderly woman near me registered tremendous enjoyment. Who am I to say her nay?

But don't think that such films are mere entertainment. In this and others like it I seem to detect a message too. We have been wasting our lives, you and I. We have missed the greatest thing of all. We ought to have been in vaudeville. Q.

THREE SECRETS

Starring: Eleanor Parker, Patricia Neal, Ruth Roman, with Frank Lovejoy, Leif Erickson, Ted de Corsia, Edmond Ryan.
Producer: Milton Sperling.
Director: Robert Wise. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 100 minutes.

The sailor's second string, the racketeer's mistress and the woman who found she was pregnant two weeks after her divorce, all sent their children to the same adoption home on the same day. (What a commentary on contemporary ethics that a woman who has a child by her husband should hush the fact up because they have already hustled through a divorce.)

Four years later the press reveals that a boy from the home, admitted on the same day as these three "unwants", is stranded on a mountain, the only survivor of a plane accident. The home refuses to disclose his parentage and each mother is anxiously convinced that the boy is hers. Blood is thicker than adoption rules. The situation is worked out rather artificially.

For the benefit of those who imagine that the principles of Christian

morality were invented by priests to make life more difficult for Catholics I should like to point out that if the three women had observed them by abstaining from illicit relations and divorce they would not have had all the unhappiness portrayed in this film. Q.

THE WOLF OF THE SILA (Il Lupo Della Sila)

Starring: Silvana Mangano, with Amadeo Nazzari, Jacques Sernas and Victor Gassmann. A Lux Film: with Italian dialogue and English subtitles. **Director:** Duilio Coletti. **Distributors:** Archway Film Distributors.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 75 minutes.

The trade papers list this film as "fair Italian offering for specialised audiences". The manager of the cinema at which it was press-shown assured me that it contained the highly seasoned mixture which the public palate apparently appreciates.

For my part, I found the film, after a quick-fire opening sequence, tedious, noisy, melodramatic and quite unconvincing. I was reminded of the man who said: "Every Italian is a born actor; the worst ones go into films." Certainly we have seen some very poor efforts in recent months. After *Vivere in Pace*, *Bicycle Thieves* and *Angelina* we have been spoilt for second-feature offerings from Italy. Then, too, the tendency to underline physical contours at the expense of story development and acting ability, so noticeable in *Bitter Rice*, indicates a lamentable deterioration into mere commercial film-exploitation away from the art of cinema.

The story is a version of the vendetta theme so beloved of Italians. A girl whose brother and mother die as a result of the family pride of the local "squire" sets out to seduce both the squire and his son. There is much shooting and several unnecessarily suggestive scenes before the requisite "happy end" is reached. Incidentally the squire carries his family pride to the other world for it causes him to die with a lie on his lips. Is not this subversive to good morality? Or do you think people will not notice it? V.

RETURN OF THE FRONTIERSMAN

Starring: Gordon MacRae, Julie London, Rory Calhoun, Jack Holt. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Director:** Richard Bare. Presented by Warner Bros. in Technicolor. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C.

There was once a film magnate who had twenty horses. Hour by hour he sat watching them in their paddock. And as he sat he was puzzled, for those fine young horses were restive and fretful. But he was not idle as he sat there day by day: he was chasing an idea. At last he got it: he leapt to his feet and shouted, "Let's make a film, them there 'orses need some exercise."

T.

IF YOU FEEL LIKE SINGING

Starring: Judy Garland, Gene Kelly, Gloria De Haven. **Producer:** Joe Pasternak. **Director:** Charles Walters. A Metro-Goldwyn Mayer Production. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 109 minutes.

Judy, they tell me, is an older and plumper Judy, but there is no doubt that she still has all the vim, pep and sparkle of former days, and has a growing maturity as an actress as well.

This musical is all the better for not being set up-stage and in the dressing-rooms and night clubs of Broadway. Instead it all takes place in the technicolored fresh air at Judy's farm and in Judy's barn; for you must know that Judy is a farmer—no ordinary farmer, but a "master" or "mistress" farmer, whichever it is. Anyway she's gotta farm, it's hers, and she owns it. And she's for standing no nonsense when a show company descend on her to use her premises for rehearsals and to accept her hospitality. They must go. Well, if not, they must at least earn their keep by working on the farm. You should see the well-meaning efforts of these sophisticated players in grappling with farm work, and all the consequent horse-play, dog-play, chicken-play, pig-play and cow-play. (Do not laff or larf, O gentle reader from Bootle or Battersea, for what sort

of fist would YOU make at milking a cow?) Give us "techni-smell", or the scent organs Mr. Aldous Huxley once spoke of, and we would feel we were right "down on the farm" ourselves.

Mr. Kelly—whose dancing is superb and whose love-making is better than tolerable—after much drilling of his team put up a great show. But at the last moment his leading lady walks out on him, and Judy, who, you must know, has never before put foot on stage (!) fills the part as if she were born to it. And, of course, she was.

G.

THE WOMAN WITH NO NAME

Starring: Phyllis Calvert and Edward Underdown, with Helen Cherry, Richard Burton, Anthony Nicholls, James Hayter, Betty Ann Davies, Amy Veness, Andrew Osborn. **Producer:** John Stafford. **Director:** Ladislav Vajda. **Distributors:** Associated British-Pathé Ltd. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 120 minutes.

This is an unhappy story with a pleasant ending. Our old friend amnesia provides the main prop of the plot, helped out by a curious lack of frankness on the part of people who, in normal circumstances, would be expected to reveal their thoughts to one another. Amnesia is not in itself boring, but we have seen it work its way out in G.I.s and others too often not to feel that we have been here before. Dreams and flashbacks also come into it and there is a frustrated, jealous woman whom the audience find out too early. I fear this is just another essay in psychology which Associated British-Pathé have made less well than the Americans used to do. Yvonne Winter (Phyllis Calvert) loses her memory during the bombing of London and marries a young pilot while she is still in that condition. Then things begin to happen which a reviewer cannot mention without spoiling the story for anyone who is going to see the film. Suffice it to say that the acting is good and some of the shots rather beautiful. As casual entertainment it should be quite successful, but there would be no point in going out of one's way to see it.

J. C.

AFTER THE STORM

Starring: Nicholas Stuart, Marte Harell, Adrienne Gessner.
Producer: Willy Wachtel.
Director: G. Uccick. A Cordial-Gamma Production. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 89 minutes.

No section of the public, I think, can possibly enjoy this very unsatisfactory film. There is some creditable acting by Marte Harell and Adrienne Gessner, and some good background music of the symphonic kind, but the story falters and finally peters out. An American officer stationed in Salzburg after the war falls in love with a fair pianist, upon whom he lavishes luxurious gifts. She had just escaped from her deportation to Germany, and cannot fully reciprocate the American's advances because of the memory of an old lover who had been reported dead these last three years. Unfortunately he returns—a broken and neurotic man—on the very day of her engagement to the American. Her suicide ends the film—which had been going on already far too long—and everyone in the film, and in the audience, is left very unhappy.

G.

PAGLIACCI

(Love of a Clown)

Starring: Tito Gobbi and Gina Lollobrigida. **Director:** Mario Costa. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 70 minutes.

This is the most successful of the series of filmed operas which we have had from Italy. Its simple plot and compact setting lend themselves more easily to film adaptation than did *Barber of Seville* or *Rigoletto*. Nevertheless it still suffers from the cramping conventions of stage traditions, and the outsize gestures and facial movements customary in the opera-house lean dangerously near to the comic when transcribed for the screen.

The singing, as such, is superb. Tito Gobbi gives new meaning and pathos to the well-known Prologue by his careful interpretation of the words. He doubles the rôle of Silvio, the somewhat colourless lover of Nedda, and Tonio, the deformed clown. This

provides him with an opportunity for two markedly different characterisations.

The part of Nedda is satisfactorily played by a beautiful girl, Gina Lollobrigida, about whom it is difficult to be sure whether she really sings or is badly dubbed. The unsatisfactory dubbing is noticeable with some of the other characters, too.

If this were not grand opera one would feel compelled to comment on the low moral tone of the piece. Apparently one can get away with adultery and murder so long as one sings about it. V.

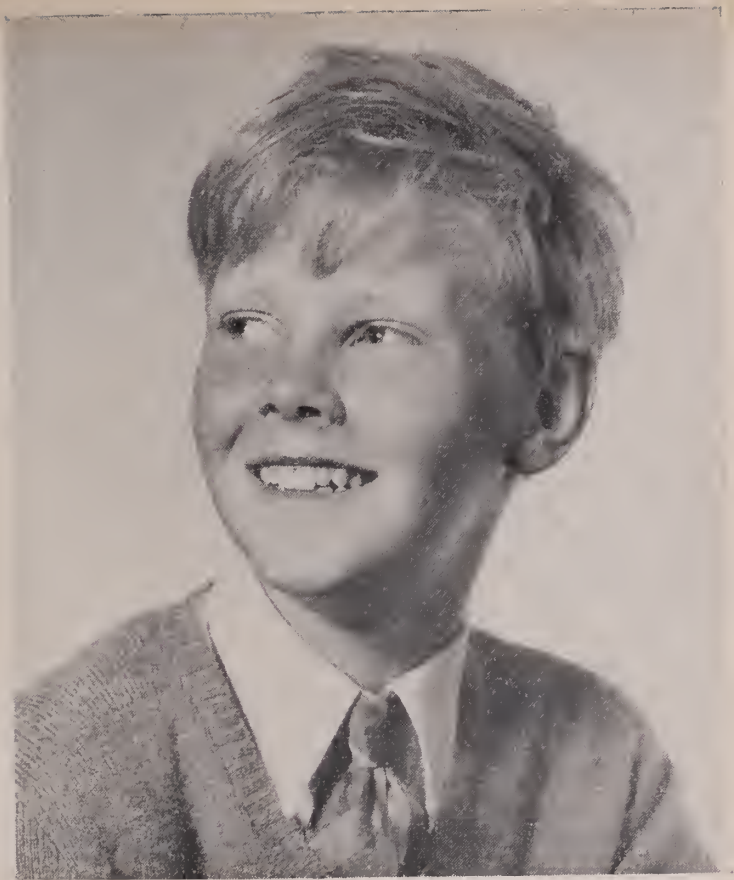
THE MAGNET

Starring: Stephen Murray, Kay Walsh and William Fox. An Ealing Studios Film. **Director:** Charles Frend. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 85 minutes approx.

It is a rare and refreshing thing to hear the uninhibited laughter of young children at a Press Show. It is the greatest tribute a director could desire and though Charles Frend would agree, I am sure, that not all films about children are necessarily films for children, he will, surely, have felt as happy as I did to hear the young film players laughing at their own antics in *The Magnet* even though some of them were too young to savour the full implications of T. E. B. Clarke's screen-play.

Charles Frend told me that the children, particularly William Fox, were very easy to deal with. On the other hand, I am sure that much of the successful naturalness of the youngsters in this film was due to Frend's patience and understanding. T. E. B. Clarke, too, deserves much praise because it was primarily his success in reporting the atmosphere of boyish behaviour and methods of thought as demonstrated by a group of endearing young Merseyside urchins. William Fox and Michael Brook, Jr., two more-refined urchins from the South, fitted into the Liverpool picture admirably, but I think that many will agree with me that we could have done with a larger dose of Merseyside urchinry.

The story is a simple one about a boy in quarantine because of scarlet fever who, by means of guile, induces a



William Fox in happy mood

smaller boy to give him a large magnet. Conscience-stricken at evident signs of divine displeasure he tries to get rid of the magnet. This he finds easier thought of than accomplished. Eventually, he is convinced that the police are after him for the death of the little owner of the magnet. In fact, the magnet has been the means of collecting enough money to buy the local hospital an iron lung.

The fun is consistent and the sly digs at psychiatric diagnosis and practice (the boy's father is a psychiatrist and thinks he knows what is disturbing his son) will please many who, like the reviewer, have been wearied with pretentious essays in cinema psychology. Stephen Murray

and Kay Walsh are suitably restrained as the parents of the boy. Meredith Edwards scores a notable triumph as a hospital appeal-manager with a vivid imagination. William Fox is delightfully real and unprecocious. I am glad to learn that he does not wish to make any more films. I hope he is allowed to have his way.

The camera-work is as unpretentious as it should be in a film of this kind in which self-conscious work with lens and angles would have distracted one from the essential naivety of the action. Altogether, a pleasing piece of entertainment for young and old in which the wise will have the largest share.

LA BEAUTE DU DIABLE

Starring: Michel Simon and Gerard Philippe, with Simon Valère and Nicole Besnard. **Director:** René Clair. **Distributors:** G.C.T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

When the director of *Sous Les Toits de Paris*, *A Nous La Liberté* and *Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie* makes a film, it is an event. When the subject of the film is the Faust legend the event becomes an occasion. It is not enough to say, as M. Clair said at the Press reception, that the critics must decide whether he has succeeded; we want to know why he chose this subject and why he modified it, as he did. A man of his intelligence would naturally realise the significance of the Faust story at this juncture: the man who desires knowledge and power, not in order to serve his Creator or his fellow creatures but that he may be equal with God—the temptation that led to Original Sin. It is, perhaps, why atomic physicists seem nowadays attracted to Communism, because they imagine that the Marxian dialectic relieves them of the necessity of belief in and therefore service of God. Did M. Clair see the appositeness of his parable to the state of mankind today? Faust knew how to make gold and so established himself as supreme ruler, but when men went to count their riches they found nothing but dust.

The Marlowe and Goethe versions have evidently been studied, but René Clair has given us an entirely original slant on the traditional story though it must be admitted that the "happy-end" rather weakens it. The first half of the film is brilliantly conceived. The second half is tedious and discursive and at moments descends to the banal, especially when Mephistopheles, hitherto having had the ability to appear anywhere at will, has to pant short-breathedly down steep stairs to retrieve the fatal parchment which has fluttered through the window to the angry crowd below. Nevertheless, there are so many moments of fine acting and intelligent cinematography

that we are willing to overlook the cloven hoof, even from M. Clair.

The story is set in the mid-nineteenth century and we are introduced to a doddering old professor who is haunted by a handsome pupil with horned hair and a cynical disregard of the professor's prestige. The handsome pupil eventually takes the place of the aged professor by means of a neat device which assumes that it is the devil within us whom we must restrain. Faust is given youth again and Mephistopheles canters around in the guise of the old professor profoundly shocking his academic colleagues by his lecherous and abandoned attitudes.

Michel Simon is superb as the old man and later, Mephistopheles. His diabolic gracefulness of movement is something quite extraordinary. Gerard Philippe, too, in his two equivalent rôles, gives a masterly performance. Particularly fine is his rapturous excitement as he savours the physical delights of a youthful body again; athletic movement, the pangs of hunger and the admiration which his good looks arouse in all around him.

The moral of the story is as valid as the Faust story ever was, though one fears that the unbeliever will be given no reason to alter his suspicion that religion is superstition and the believer will have to impose his own orthodox interpretation on to a framework capable of several variations.

La Beaute Du Diable is a film for all those who take delight in excellent work in the best French tradition.

V.

WOMAN ON THE RUN

Starring: Ann Sheridan, Dennis O'Keefe, Robert Ferris, Ross Elliott. **Producer:** Howard Welsh. **Director:** Norman Foster. A Universal International Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

A man witnesses a murder. When the police arrive he runs away. Don't ask me why. The police, the murderer,

the wife and a dog are then in full cry after him.

An obvious but unappreciated difficulty of a reviewer is that he must give different counsel to different people. I shall attempt to satisfy all classes.

Massa damnata : You will follow, as best you can, with rapt attention this thrilling drama and will love the fearful noise and meretricious suspense with which it concludes.

Alfred Hitchcock : See this. It will make you feel good.

Psychiatrists : You will find this an object lesson in sub-human behaviour.

Born leaders, Conductors of Green Line buses, Matrons of Hospitals,

Professors of Canon Law and the Jockey who rode Gaynet Rock in the Cambridgeshire : See this twice if possible. It will keep you out of circulation for a while.

Bishops and other exalted ranks : Don't bother, My Lords.

Parish Priests : Odeon seats are usually quite comfortable.

Highbrows and other miscellanea, including those who delight to discourse on lighting and cutting and depth and all the other jiggy pokery : I do not presume to advise; I doff my cap in solemn respect.

The gentle reader : See advice to Bishops.

T.

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of the Archdiocese of
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EMMET LAVERY'S *FIRST* LEGION TO BE FILMED

By William H. Mooring

(Reprinted from *The Tidings*, May 26th, 1950)

There is room at the Inn.

The famous Mission Inn at Riverside, California, for the purpose of a Hollywood movie, temporarily becomes a "Jesuit Seminary".

The First Legion, already staged in fifteen languages and played in France, post-war Germany, Belgium, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Eire, England, the Scandinavian countries, the United States and many other places, at last is being translated to the screen.

Emmet Lavery, its author, describes it as "frankly, a piece of melodrama," but believes it may help, by popular appeal, to focus upon faith in present times of doubt and confusion.

Douglas Sirk, a Lutheran married to a Catholic, is directing the picture. For many years he had wished to film it. Last year he visited Switzerland and found it running successfully to crowds, largely non-Catholic. He later arrived in Vienna to find it equally successful there. He decided it must be filmed at once.

BOYER HEADS CAST

With producer Josef Lucachevitch, formerly in French movies, he arranged private financing and chose an impressive cast headed by Charles Boyer, who plays Father Marc Arnoux (the character was called Father Aherne in the stage play but an Irish name wouldn't go with Boyer's French accent).

Instead of constructing movie sets, Douglas Sirk took over the Spanish Art Gallery at Riverside's Mission Inn and converted it into a seminary common room, transforming bedrooms immediately above the gallery into cells for the priests. Results on the screen should prove at least realistic.

The story has undergone few changes. It introduces a false "miracle" and a true one. It risks, too, a situation in which two Jesuit priests threaten to

break their vows and leave the Order.

Lavery has always admitted that these two characters represent the rare exception to the rule and serve merely to prove that the higher one reaches in the service of God the more difficult the way.

Of course in the end both priests find peace and contentment in the Jesuit Order.

There is Father Tom Rawleigh, played by John McGuire, who majored in scholastic philosophy at Santa Clara and played quarterback in that university's football team in the middle '30s. He seems an excellent choice for the young priest who still remembers a girl he once knew.

Then there's Father John Fulton, musician and poet, played by Wesley Addy, brought newly to the screen from Broadway. Father Fulton renounces his music as a necessary sacrifice and later realises that he cannot get along without it and that God does not ask him to do so. This part likely will start Wesley Addy on a serious screen career.

VARIETY OF CHARACTERS

Charles Boyer, long noted as a romantic screen hero, says the character of Father Arnoux, who gave up a great career as a lawyer to become a Jesuit priest, provides for him "a welcome opportunity to play a worthwhile rôle at a time when people everywhere need to contemplate more seriously their spiritual responsibilities".

When *The First Legion* is finished Boyer will go to France, there to "dub" French dialogue into a copy intended for European release.

Walter Hampden is cast as a world-travelled Jesuit leader, wise and good. Leo J. Carroll is cast as the stern but kindly rector of this Jesuit seminary, called in the film St. Gregory's.

William Demarest is seen as a visiting parish pastor, Monsignor Carey, who brings humorous "outside" opinion within the walls.

H. B. Warner, the Christus in de Mille's *King of Kings*, plays the invalid Father Sierra who, through the connivance of Dr. Morrell, a fallen Catholic, becomes the centre of controversy as the victim of a false "miracle".

The doctor is played by Lyle Bettger, recent Paramount discovery of whom big things are expected.

With George Zucca as Master of Novices, Taylor Holmes as St. Gregory's Vice-Rector, and an assortment of scholastics headed by Richard Mayer, supposedly a Jewish convert, and Clifford Brook, an Anglican become Catholic, the cast presents a colourful variety of religious characters.

UNUSUAL FILM EXPECTED

It is too soon to say whether or not *The First Legion* will prove a great

motion picture. It already is certain that it will be an unusual one.

There is no attempt to follow Hollywood formula. In fact it is totally ignored in a screenplay which has in it only one feminine character: a young cripple girl who is the subject of a true miracle.

Technical details are under supervision by Monsignor John J. Devlin, long associated with the Legion of Decency, and by two Jesuits, Father Thomas Sullivan and Father John E. O'Dou.

Whatever the final result may be, present signs are promising.

Allowing that the screenplay, for the purpose of balancing argument, introduces certain situations which may arouse discussion among Catholics, *The First Legion* will have been brought to the screen with honest intentions and greater caution than is usually exercised by a mixed company to whom heavy investment must remain at least one of the primary concerns.

BOOK REVIEWS

Films and You. A Young Catholic Students' Publication, 252 Swanston Street, Australia. Price 1s.

This booklet, published by the Catholic Students' Movement of Australia, discusses the Catholic attitude to films from every point of view—moral, aesthetic and technical, the last only incidentally. The power of the cinema for good and evil, the motives that inspire the producer and the film-goer, statistics and effects are analysed so as to be of practical use to the Catholic film fan. A particularly pleasing thing about the book, is the acceptance of, and quotation from various statements in the Popes, bishops and different Catholic books and newspapers. It includes an article by William Higginbotham of the *Film Guide*, Father Maine, S.J., Gabriel Fallon and the Chaplain of the Youth Movement in Australia. The article "What to look for at the pictures" is especially good.

The book deserves to be put into a

stouter cover. At present it is flimsy: forty-eight pages, wire stitched with a paper back.

Pilgrimage to Fatima. The Book of the Film. By Very Rev. Hilary Carpenter, O.P. Pp. 31. Price 2/6. The Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

Those who wish an excellent synopsis of the story of Our Lady's appearances at Fatima should invest in this little pamphlet by Fr. Hilary Carpenter.

The tremendous devotional success of the film will no doubt move many to desire some sort of record of it. There are 26 photographs in the little book, some of them stills from the film, and the leading ideas behind the inception of the film, its purpose and significance are expertly discussed.

The reader can thus retain a short, accurate account of the details of the original miracles at Fatima and the evolution of the wide-spread devotion to Our Lady.

F. A. K.

INSTITUTE NOTES

Pilgrimage to Fatima

The season at the Hammer Theatre, Wardour Street, London, has been most successful from the point of view of the many people who have crowded each evening to see *Pilgrimage To Fatima*. Though we have had to put on extra showings each evening it has not prevented people having to be turned away because of lack of room.

The collections taken at each performance just about cover the cost of hiring the cinema, so we should be glad if friends in parishes around London, and the provinces too, would arrange to have the film shown in their district and so enable us to distribute it and also secure some money with which to carry on the work which *Pilgrimage to Fatima* has started.

It is clear that films with a definitely religious purpose are capable of stirring people to spiritual endeavours and though the most enthusiastic of us would not claim that *Pilgrimage to Fatima* is filmically first class, it has most certainly been made the instrument of bringing many people already to a deeper awareness of the message of Fatima.

Regional Film Centres

Pressure of work has caused us to postpone reports of several interesting conferences and contacts until next issue. While our Hon. Secretary was in Scotland he met with considerable enthusiasm for Catholic film action among both clergy and laity. He was particularly glad to be able to view

Priests For Scotland, a four reel, Kodachrome account of the history and development of the Scottish seminaries. It was made almost entirely by Father John McKee, B.A., of Blairs College, Aberdeen, and is an excellent example of what can be done by a person with a camera, an idea and lots of imagination and patience. We hope to give more details about this film later.

It is evident that there is an abundance of interest in the possibilities of Catholic film action up and down the land. We need the first difficult steps to be taken in order to start a chain of reaction on films that could harness them for Christianity.

YOUR FILM SHOW

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Place Mews, London,
S.W.7**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have an opinion to express, a comment to make, an idea to offer, the Editor will be delighted to hear from you.

Cover Personality

Sir,

On reading your "Cover Personality" item of September, I was very interested to see you have been having criticism of your choice of worth while stars.

I would like to let you know that I, for one, am very appreciative of these pen pictures and am sure your critics—the (un)constructive "public that does not exist" type—are very much in the minority.

Heaven forbid that you should write "heart throb" sketches . . . Your article on Leo Genn was very informative and factual. I particularly remember also, your very fine articles on Pierre Fresnay, Jean Simmons, Cyril Cusack, Glynis Johns and Valli.

If you have left out any Catholics suitable to your Cover Personalities, please include them. One last request. When you can, write about a director instead of the stars; we hear too little about them.

Yours sincerely,

BRIAN SMALL.

Kilkeel, Co. Down.

An Opinion from America

Sir,

. . . Our opinion of FOCUS is very high. We believe that it is the finest Catholic film review on the market. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and everyone involved upon the truly magnificent job you are doing. That God will bless you in this work is our sincere prayer.

Sincerely in Christ,

GEOFFREY GAUGHAM, O.S.B.

The Grail, Indiana, U.S.A.

Wrong Echo

Sir,

Those of your readers who proceeded as far as the second paragraph of my review of *A Life of Her Own* in your last issue, were probably mystified by a reference to the echo of the human heart which Hollywood have discovered. The word should have been ache not echo. No doubt my bad writing was at fault.

T.

St. Anthony's,
5 Garratt Road,
Edgware,
Middlesex.

A Christmas Suggestion

Give your friends a subscription to FOCUS for Christmas. The annual subscription is 7s., post free.

If desired, a greetings card can be sent with the first copy.

HISTORY TEACHING AIDS

By Our Educational Panel

LIBRARIES

N.C.V.A.E. Educational Foundation
Film Library, Brooklands House,
Weybridge, Surrey.

G.B.I. Film Library, Aintree Road,
Perivale, Middx.

Common Ground, Sydney Place, S.W.7.
"Gateway" Film Productions, 84 Powys
Lane, Palmers Green, N.13.

Dawn Trust Film Library, Aylesbury,
Bucks.

Daily Mail School - Aid Service,
Carmelite House, E.C.4.

B.I.F., Film House, Wardour Street,
W.1.

C.F.L. Central Film Library, Imperial
Institute, S. Kensington, S.W.7.

FILMS

Beginnings of History

N.C.V.A.E., No. 211, A1 (sound), 5
reels. Hiring charge: 7s. 6d. per
reel first day, 2s. 6d. additional
days, or £1 complete.

This film is a long one, but apart from some unnecessary preliminaries, there is not a dull moment in it. The story is confined to our own island, and this, though it limits the sources to be drawn upon, makes it possible to present a connected account of the beginnings of our civilisation. There are five reels to the film, which can be hired separately.

The first reel attempts to give some idea of the capacities and limitations of primitive man by showing some of his weapons, and by a visit to the Zoo, and then passes on to give an account of life in the Old Stone Age showing his cave dwellings, his tools and his drawings. Useful maps are given of the movements of the ice.

The second reel describes life in the

New Stone Age, giving glimpses of the beginnings of the domestic arts, such as sowing and grinding corn, and the burial customs of the earlier period, with remarkable pictures of a Stone Age Village in the Orkneys.

The Bronze Age is illustrated in the third reel. It opens with a clever demonstration of the processes of smelting and casting in bronze, and many pictures are given of the implements and jewellery of the Beaker Folk and of their famous megaliths and temples, especially those at Stonehenge and Avebury.

The fourth reel deals with the Age of Iron. Examples are given of the early British camps found all over England and Scotland, and there are detailed pictures of Maiden Castle.

In the last reel there are interesting pictures of life in the reconstructed farmstead at Woodbury, which bring the story to a close.

This film is to be recommended from every point of view. The idea of development is conveyed and sense of continuity maintained, while the story of the past is reconstructed without recourse to the imaginary and sensational drawings which often disfigure our school text books. The film held an audience of university students but is clear enough to be followed by all but young children, if taken in small doses.

Medieval Castle

G.B.I., No. F.4710 (sound), FM.4710 (mute) 2 reels. Hiring charges:
Sound 7s. 6d. per reel first day,
2s. 6d. additional days; Mute 5s. 6d.
per reel first day, 1s. 6d. additional
days.

It would be difficult to improve on this film for a complete and interesting

survey of the development of castle-building in the Middle Ages. Excellent photographs of medieval castles are skilfully combined with animated diagrams, necessary for illustrations of methods of defence and attack. Perhaps the most important and satisfying feature of the film is the emphasis throughout on the reasons underlying changes in structure and, therefore, development in style. The building of round keeps, wall-towers, gate-houses and concentric walls are shown as the defensive countermeasures gradually evolving to meet new methods of siege and assault.

The film surveys the changes in military architecture, century by century, from the simple Norman motte and bailey castle to the elaborate concentric castles of the thirteenth century, and provides interesting details of the castle's chief defensive features: embrasures, defensive hoardings, etc., and the importance of natural features in determining site. Methods of siege warfare are fully illustrated as providing the explanation of changes in military architecture, and vivid diagrammatic illustrations show siege-engines, trebuchets and rams at work.

Some detail is also given of the castle as a residence and diagrams and photographs of the domestic parts of the buildings lead up to beautiful photographs of fourteenth and fifteenth century residences which retain only a few external traces of their military origin. The film would be valuable for children of eleven and upwards both in its own right and as a means of revising the medieval period.

Houses in History

N.C.V.A.E., No. 241, A1 (sound), 1 reel.
Hiring charge: 7s. 6d. first day,
2s. 6d. additional days. Also from
C.F.L., UK.762, no charge.

There are some good photographs in this film, but it is too scrappy to be of much use, and leaves one doubting whether this is really a subject which lends itself to filming in view of the number and popularity of well-illustrated books about houses that are available. One cannot help feeling that much better results could be obtained by showing pictures on the

epidiascope; or better still by having a good selection of books on the classroom shelf or in the library, a method which might also help to develop the children's taste for such books.

Civil War in England

G.B.I., F.4578 (sound), 4 reels. Hiring charges: 7s. 6d. per reel first day, 2s. 6d. additional days.

The making of films for history teaching is subject to some limitations, especially that of cost. As is obvious, a full-scale descriptive film of the Civil War would be an expensive affair and out of the question for teaching purposes. As a substitute the use of diagrams and drawings has been enlisted in this case, with fairly satisfactory results. Some of the animated drawings are rather wooden, but the diagrams and commentary are clear and helpful.

Suitability: 13+.

Stuart Britain

"Gateway", No. A.21 (sound), B.21 (mute). Hiring charge: 12s. 6d. first day, 5s. additional days.

This is a most successful film. It is short, yet in twelve minutes manages to convey an authentic picture of life in Stuart times as seen through the eyes of an elderly Royalist country gentleman, who has lived through the Civil Wars and the Great Plague. He is shown at supper with his wife and an old acquaintance whom he has chanced to meet on his daily walk, and their conversation touches on many matters of political and social interest. The pictures are pleasant and the detail correct, as is the idiom, if a little laboured. The accompanying notes are excellent and indispensable to the mute version.

STRIPS

Digging for History

Daily Mail School-Aid Service. Price: 12s. 6d. 46 frames.

The particular value of this strip is its capacity for rousing interest by the liveness of its contact. It provides an introduction to the study of the past through archaeological field-work, and

shows a broad selection of ancient sites. It begins with a section on the history of archaeology in this country, illustrating by picture and diagram the work of the archaeologist from the early amateur and treasure hunter to the modern air-photographer. The second section is devoted mainly to a study of the excavation of the pre-1900 B.C. Kentish long barrow, Julieberric's Grave, followed by a set of photographs of comparable sites which yet required different method. The film frames deal with the Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial from O. G. S. Crawford's photographs which make an immediate impression.

The educational value of the strip lies partly in the clear statement and vivid illustration of the precision and meticulous care which the field-worker exercises. The strip is of use in the teaching not only of History but of Latin and Geography and touches two widely differing groups; the keen youngster whose attention is all on the pictures and for whom the diagrams are too detailed, and the senior with an interest in stratigraphy and the part it plays in the assessment of evidence, who is provided with detailed diagrams of stratification at Maiden Castle, for example, and to whom is offered a possibility of field-work. The strip is accompanied by comprehensive teaching notes which both merit and demand careful preparation.

The Village

(*Medieval Life Series*)

Common Ground, C.G.A.577. Price : 25s.

This is an attractive, gaily-coloured strip of great value in bringing one aspect of the medieval period to life. Beginning with a plan of a medieval village and illustrations of the three-field and strip systems, details of land cultivation, harvesting, and threshing are given before showing the village craftsmen and the lighter side of manorial life. From the pictorial aspect alone, the strip makes a strong appeal to the imagination, but in addition each frame contains abundant detail for observation and comment, especially the interior of the manorial hall, the church and the villeins' huts. Seven excellent pictures show recreations of the time—archery, wrestling and even whip and top—but

there is nothing to show that there were holidays because there were Holydays. In this connection, proportions within the strip could well be adjusted—only three of the thirty-two frames have any bearing on the religious life of the time, and there is little to suggest the fusion of religion and life in the Middle Ages.

This otherwise valuable film-strip perpetuates the now "exploded" theory that balks of unploughed and therefore wasted land separated the strips in the open fields. It is more generally accepted that boundary stones and double furrows marked changes of ownership. This film strip is most useful for teaching revision purposes and is suitable for children aged 11+.

The Chantry of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick

Common Ground, CGA.483. Price : 15s.

As one of the series of Historic Records, this film strip aims at presenting both a record and interpretation of the past, by means of valuable and generally inaccessible material of a visual nature. This film strip of one of the loveliest English chantry chapels has admirably succeeded in this purpose.

The magnificent bronze effigy of the Earl in full armour lying high on the Purbeck marble tomb and surrounded with figures of mourners and angels is presented in a setting which is in itself of great beauty—the fifteenth century fan-vaulted chapel with stone-carving, metal-work and carved stalls of the same period and the whole lit by the wide East window. The chief interest lies in the effigy itself and in the perfection of craftsmanship revealed in the noble, dignified features of the knight and the precision of the smallest details of his armour. In fact, the strip provided opportunities for close study which visitors to the chapel do not enjoy. One can see here the fine character of the head and hands and every minute detail of the suit of plate armour, the buckles at the wrist, the shoulder-pieces fastened to the breast-plate with rivets and the great crested helm. The mourners standing in niches round the tomb also provide a wealth of material for study.

This is a magnificent film strip

which does justice to its subject and will stimulate the imagination and deepen understanding of the past. The interest of the armour, heraldic devices and architectural features of the chapel make this film strip more suitable for older children, from 15 upwards.

The Field of the Cloth of Gold

Common Ground, CGA.458 (in colour).
Price : 25s.

This film strip, like the previous one, is a notable addition to the Historic Records Series and being itself in colour, can more successfully suggest the colour and richness of its subject. The material for the strip is provided by the paintings at Hampton Court celebrating the meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. The strip is cleverly built up from scenes from the two paintings, the Embarkation and the actual Field of Cloth of Gold, and the details are presented in such a way as to suggest movement and progress—the departure from Dover, Channel crossing and progress beyond Calais to the meeting place. The strip is, indeed, full of action and movement—the painter has given life to every corner of his canvas and every scene is convincing and real. The sailors can be seen at work on board the ships, unfurling the sails and climbing the rigging and one is given a vivid impression of the activity surrounding the historic embarkation and meeting.

The elaborate detail of the painting reveals to perfection the characteristic features of the sixteenth century galleons, masts and sails and details of rigging and intimate glimpses of activities on deck, the drummer boy in action, the piles of cannon-balls and powder barrels. The splendour of the occasion is stressed by the pennons and streamers of gold flying from masts and bell-tents and more especially by the dominating figure of Henry VIII in cloth of gold and ermine, surrounded by his entourage and with the Sword of State borne before him.

The colours of the strip are faithful to the rich, dark tones of the paintings and suitable for this "view of earthly glory". For its details of shipping

and everyday activities and for display of pageantry this film strip would be of value for children from 13 upwards.

TWO STRIPS RECOMMENDED FOR TEACHERS OF RELIGION

Low Mass

By John Gillick, S.J. 80 double frames :
12s. 6d.

This strip, a short notice of which appeared in the last issue of *Focus*, can be recommended unreservedly. The Heythrop Film Strip Secretary modestly suggests that though not perfect it might help to fill a need; it certainly goes a long way to supplying a realistic and genuinely moving presentation of the rites and prayers of the Mass in a convenient visual medium. The aim is perfectly simple—to provide a complete set of pictures on the rite of Low Mass, of a kind that lend themselves equally well to devotional, liturgical or dogmatic treatment. The strip is very moderately priced, for in its 80 double frames there is ample material for a whole series of lessons or illustrated lectures. It would be difficult to find any fault with the art of the cameraman responsible for the pictures. His choice of just those significant instants when mystery and wonder seem caught and held in the slightest movement of the priest's hands make the viewing of the strip a spiritual experience; while the meaning of the sacred words which the priest must utter come home to us with new force as we see his eyes turned to the open pages of the missal or gazing on the paten and chalice. Each individual picture is an artistic whole, yet there is a continuity and development which calls for a response in the mind of one who studies the structure of the Mass with the aid of these pictures.

The wide range of material covered by the strip can only be indicated here by reference to its four divisions: Part I, "The Preparation of our Souls", covers the Mass of the Catechumens; Part II, "The Preparation of the Matter", includes the Offertory; Parts III and IV are titled "The Sacrifice" and "The Communion". None of the 80 frames is lifeless or static; priest and server are always in action and one gets the illusion of

purposeful movement and forgets the limitations of the "still" picture. Titles are provided on an accompanying leaflet instead of on the film. Here too the choice of words is significant and serves to heighten the inspirational value of the strip. It is difficult to give precision to this statement without direct reference to the pictures themselves, but perhaps an example may serve. Frame 30: "Lavabo inter innocentes" shows the priest and very small server in close co-operation in the performance of a symbolic action in which all the people too are called to play their part.

There is nothing in the strip which makes it too difficult for use with even very young children; but its appeal, because of its sincerity, is not limited to any age. Those who have the task of training boys to serve on the altar would surely welcome this strip as an aid. The little server is seen almost throughout, in a subordinate but important rôle. His movements are natural yet dignified, and his serious intentness is an unspoken sermon, for it shows a genuine and intelligent participation, not a meaningless exercise.

The majority of the photographs here collected have appeared in Fr. J. Coventry's recent book "The Breaking of Bread" (Sheed & Ward) and the study of this by the user of the strip would provide much information and guidance as to methods of treatment. The strip can, however, stand alone, or be used in conjunction with the words of the Ordinary of the Mass or any text book in use. It will be a valuable addition to any film strip library or private collection.

This strip cannot be purchased from Heythrop College as previously stated. For suppliers' address see next issue.

Lourdes

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It is not really an easy task to make a successful film or strip on a subject such as this, and certainly it would be almost impossible to make anything that would come near to satisfying those who know and love Lourdes. The line of approach adopted in this strip is therefore probably a wise choice. It does not attempt to evoke

an atmosphere, but is a straightforward attempt to tell objectively in pictures what a pilgrimage to Lourdes is really like. It is practical and informative rather than devotional or theoretical, but either as an introduction for intending pilgrims or as a reminder of past experience it should serve its purpose well. The quality of the pictures is a bit variable, and those showing crowds and processions are less successful, since it is difficult to get an effective "still" picture of a crowded moving scene.

The subject is grouped by four sub-titles: The Town; St. Bernadette; the Basilica and Grotto; The Blessing of the Sick. Brief notes which accompany the strip explain quite adequately the significance of each picture. The strip can be recommended for Catholic schools or for clubs. There is no jarring note either of sentimentality or of lack of reverence, and the teacher who knows his Lourdes well will be able to create for his audience, with the help of these pictures, something of his own conception of the inner meaning and spirit of the Lourdes of Our Lady and of Bernadette.

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CALVERT

However long one spends in the atmosphere of the film studio and no matter what good intentions one has of making allowances for the harrowing and unnatural life which film work imposes upon its slaves, it is always with a warming emotion of surprise and pleasure that one comes across the rare cases of the genuinely unspoiled player in films. By all the standards Phyllis Calvert is one such. A friend who knew her some years ago, when she was working with the Malvern Players Repertory Company, describes her as "natural and unspoilt off the stage and most attractive and friendly". Further details inform us that she has a charm that is something beyond mere prettiness and that no photography does justice to her glorious auburn hair and that she has a complexion that needs no assistance from make-up.

This air of friendliness transmits itself across the screen and, added to competence as an actress, makes it all the more surprising that she has had so little real opportunity for worthwhile work in films. It is often said that British films have no actresses comparable with the front-ranking American names. That is not really true. It is, surely, that we have not taken the trouble with scripts and direction and camerawork that provide that background against which the great names are built up. Phyllis Calvert has all the qualities necessary for great work, but until film producers make it their business to study their actors and actresses as craftsmen rather than box-office marionettes, she is not likely to find much use for her talents.

She had appeared in five films such as George Formby's *Let George Do It* and *Charley's Big-Hearted Aunt* with Arthur Askey before her work in *Kipps*, opposite Michael Redgrave, made the critics comment on the excellence of her playing. I still regard her performance as the little maidservant in H. G. Wells' story as the best opportunity she has had to present a really rounded characterisation. It rang true in a

way that some of her subsequent parts have not. Then followed *The Young Mr. Pitt*, with Robert Donat, in a colourless rôle, and *Uncensored*, with Eric Portman, a story of the Belgian Resistance which, in spite of its direction by Anthony Asquith, received little of the support which I think it merited.

It is now almost a thing to be ashamed of to have appeared in *Fanny by Gaslight*, but Phyllis Calvert survived it and lived to make *2,000 Women*, and the fabulous *Madonna of the Seven Moons*, in which she played a dual rôle to all intents and purposes, a schizophrenic Roman matron who in certain seasons became a wild gypsy brigandess. A fantastic story, but she made the best of it and added to her prestige. In 1945 she made *They Were Sisters*, starring with James Mason and Anne Crawford and Dulcie Gray, in a pleasing if unexciting story of the married life of three sisters. In this film she was most herself, I think, possibly due to the fact that her husband in this film was her husband in real life, Peter Murray Hill. *Men of Two Worlds* came before the preposterous *Magic Bow*, and this was followed by *The Root of all Evil*. Then came a period in America under a kind of lend-lease arrangement between the Rank Organisation and the American studios.

Her Hollywood experiences did her no good as an actress. It almost seemed as if she were deliberately miscast and her talents wasted. *Time Out Of Mind* and *My Own True Love* were for Universal-International and Paramount respectively.

A spell back in England produced *Broken Journey* and *The Golden Madonna*, a lush, Italian-laced story about a missing masterpiece, again neither of them outstanding.

Phyllis Calvert has now withdrawn from contracts with film companies and is following the wise if unusual course of looking for parts that are really worthwhile. In this we can but praise her integrity and wish her every success.

JOHN VINCENT.

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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



JANUARY

PRICE

6^D

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(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

JANUARY 1951

No. 1

FOCUS AND THE FUTURE

FOCUS enters its fourth year of publication. It does so with a happy heart and a firm will. Those who ought to know have passed the verdict that its general condition is sound. They are of the opinion that it is fulfilling the purpose for which it was created: to focus attention on the positive powers which films possess to minister to life, art, religion and happiness. Nevertheless, they have offered some sensible and creative criticisms.

Undoubtedly, the way in which a thing is presented is important, so important that many friends would like FOCUS to appear a little smarter . . . with a better "make-up", as they say in the trade. FOCUS has its dreams. Until a fairy godmother arrives it must deny itself the pleasure of a complete New Look. Who knows what the future may bring? In the meantime, it will endeavour to be more professional in its "make-up".

FOCUS respects criticism. It invites criticism. For it is creative criticism which makes its work grow stronger. But, it would be a fool if it absorbed all criticisms. It is not a sponge. FOCUS does accept the criticism that more emphasis should be placed on *The Apostolate of the Film*. Elsewhere in these pages you may read a beautiful, strong prayer which is said by Catholics and Christian-minded people in Hollywood. FOCUS would like to see

this prayer become the future prayer of all members of the Catholic Film Institute in this country.

In the future it will be well to remember these words of Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII . . .

"The natural tendency of fallen man towards earthly things, his incapacity to comprehend the things of the spirit of God, is, unfortunately, furthered in our day by the complicity of all that surrounds him. Often enough God is not denied, He is not blasphemed, He, as it were, does not exist. The propaganda for an earthly life without God is open, seductive, continuous. It has been rightly observed that, generally, even in the movies classed as morally unobjectionable, the players live and die as if there were no God, no redemption, no church. It is not our purpose now to question intentions; but it is nevertheless true that the consequences of such neutral film productions are already widespread and profound . . . Add to this, deliberately intended and wicked propaganda for excluding God from the family, society and the State. It is a torrent whose filthy waters seek to penetrate even to the Catholic fold. And how many have already been contaminated! With their lips they still profess themselves Catholic, but they do not realise that their conduct factually belies their profession. There is no time to lose . . ."

EDITOR.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 1: Hollywood Catholics

By

Declan Flynn, O.F.M.

IT is interesting to record that Theodore Bonnet author of *The Mudlark*, the novel from which the film now running in London was made, is a practical Catholic. He is tall, broad and bronzed and a delightful fellow to talk to. He lives in Hollywood. So realistic are his descriptions of persons, places and things of London during the reign of Queen Victoria that one would suppose he had spent a long time in London and its environs. Bonnet has never been to England. He got to know his London through books, photographs and intense research work.

Like many other authors and artistes he has a strong devotion to St. Francis of Assisi; he told me that he would like to see a film made of St. Francis, but he believes that the Disney technique is the only one that could do justice to a film about such an attractive saint. I gathered that he and a writer friend have approached Walt Disney about the matter. Some years ago I remember Fr. Hugh McKay, O.F.M., talking to me with enthusiasm about the same project. Perhaps there is something in the idea. I wonder what a certain friar whom I met in Santa Barbara and who worked with Disney, would think of this project!

Catholic Film Actionist

I hadn't been long in Los Angeles before I received a telephone call from a gentleman with a clear, unmistakable, English accent. It was Bill Mooring. He gave me a warm welcome to the Wild West. "... If I can do anything at all for you, let me know ... consider me at your disposal". I was

grateful for such a gracious offer for it is difficult to get around the suburbs of Los Angeles: Hollywood, Beverley Hills, Culver City, etc., without a car and a guide. Earthquakes have made it dangerous to build subways. Bill and his charming, sweet-natured wife were most kind and hospitable.

The Moorings live in a cream-coloured bungalow, a stone's throw from the icy blue waters of the Pacific, where the sands gleam like silver and where you see colours in the sky, particularly at sunset, which no painter could create.

Once Hated Church

Bill is a film critic, feature writer, lecturer and an internationally recognised authority on motion pictures; but what is more important, he is a refreshing conversationalist and a most agreeable companion. His Catholicism sticks out a mile. He is not in the least aggressive about his religion, but you soon become aware that his faith is the *raison d'être* of all he does and says and writes and thinks. It was not always so. There was a time when Bill hated the Catholic Church with a great hate. Strange to relate he found the faith in Hollywood. He first went to Hollywood in 1932 at the invitation of the late Winfield Sheehan, then head of Fox studios, to work on the Academy winning film *Cavalcade*. It was the example of the talented Catholic actress Una O'Connor, who was playing in the film which forced him to examine the claims of the Catholic Church.

To find the faith in Hollywood should cause no great surprise, for in California the faith lingers like a song. The old Franciscan missions—white, adobe brick buildings constructed in the Spanish style by the Indian converts, under supervision of the padres,—are living records of the burning faith of the intrepid Junipero Serra and his missionaries who discovered and civilised this part of the world in the eighteenth century and implanted the seeds of the living faith.

California and Catholicism

It is a rich and rewarding experience to visit California where (now) orange groves and lemon groves and orchards heavy with all kinds of luscious fruits and plentiful prairies and fields bursting with vegetables and other fields bubbling with oil abound, and then, to "think back" to the days before the coming of the friars when it was inhabited by barbarians who lived in wigwams and subsisted on seeds, acorns, rodents, coyotes, snakes, crows and lizards and who accepted polygamy as the general rule. California is a rich, glorious part of the world. But its chief glory is the glory of its Catholic tradition.

Its power and its glory are enshrined even in the lovely musical names of its towns and townlets: Santa Barbara, Santa Juan Baptista, Santa Clara, Santa Juan Capistrano, Santa Monica, Santa Gabriel, San Diego, San Francisco and so on.

To drive through the colourful towns of California is to recite, automatically, the litany of the saints.

Planted the Cross

Even Hollywood evokes memories of the Catholic past, of those days when Fra Junipero Serra discovered this spot and, as was his custom, planted the holy wood of the cross and beneath its shadow offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is not too fanciful, perhaps, to think that the spirit of Junipero Serra, whose cause is about to be introduced, broods over Hollywood. Not far away a river called "Portiuncula" trickles by and as most people know Portiuncula is the cradle of the Franciscan Order

and St. Mary of the Angels, of which Los Angeles is a corruption, is a spot dear to the heart of St. Francis.

The Church and the Stars

Hollywood is not as pagan as it is painted. Every Wednesday evening, film stars, Catholics and non-Catholics of Christian principles, may be seen helping Fr. Peyton to produce his Family Theatre programme, the purpose of which is to help to christianise the world through the modern medium of films. The *Family Theatre* is a green painted wooden bungalow-like building situated at the summit of Sunset Boulevard. It dominates the interesting but straggling town of Hollywood and calls its people to prayer; no one can miss the words on its hoarding: "The family that prays together, stays together". This theatre is a beehive of industry: the script-writers, freelance writers, secretaries, typists, telephonists have no time to waste. The day's work is ended at five, when the staff foregather in the chapel and say the Rosary.

Hour of St. Francis

There is another Catholic programme created in Hollywood in which the stars play a prominent part. It is called "The Hour of St. Francis". The creative mind behind this programme is a Franciscan Friar, Fr. Hugh Noonan, O.F.M., who started the venture on a shoe-string. The purpose of this weekly programme is to bring to the world via the radio the glad tidings of Christianity. The fact that it is heard on 600 stations speaks for itself. I can best describe the nature of this programme by saying that it is the dramatisation of a short story which has punch and powder in it with a Christian philosophy which is not laid on with a trowel and yet which is in no way watered down to suit the crowd.

I was present in the studio on one occasion when a programme was being made. Playing in the programme were: Dan O'Heilily, movie star and late of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin; Pat McGeehan who is one of the best radio announcers in America; Howard Culver who runs his own daily programme; Vic Perrin, Pat Kelly, a Catholic

producer and Programme Director at radio station K.F.I., N.B.C.; Bob Mitchell, director of the famous Mitchell Boys' Choir.

The Cast Prayed

Before the cast went on the live radio they said this prayer :

O God, Divine Master, who has taught us in the great Drama of Thy Life and Death the eternal purpose of living, grant us to play our little hour on this earthly stage that we may never in deed, word or gesture shame our calling, but may fashion out of tears and laughter a deeper truth for life and a brighter hope of heaven. Who livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.

Then Fr. Kenneth, O.F.M., who is Fr. Hugh's assistant, gave the cast his blessing. There was some introductory music. Then we heard Pat McGeehan's rich voice saying : "This is the Hour of St. Francis bringing you a design for peace . . . featuring Dan O'Heilhy as John Hawes in The Great Heart of Cat Island."

Chance to do Good

After Jeanne Crain (she is a Catholic) had featured in one of these programmes she said : "Many people in this profession are most interested in doing something good, but there are so few opportunities. The Hour of St. Francis is one such outstanding opportunity to do something good. Many of us are most anxious to co-operate in helping this programme achieve its wonderful purpose."

Included among guest artists in this programme have been : Dennis Day, Pat O'Brien, Ann Blyth, Joan Leslie, J. Carrol Naish, Jane Wyatt, Charles Laughton, Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, Ann Jamieson, Macdonald Carey, William Lundigan, Steve McNally, Ruth Hussey, Paul Kelly, Wallace Ford, Roddy McDowall.

Not all who are invited to appear on The Hour of St. Francis are Catholics but they all represent in their lives the best of Christian values.

(To be continued)

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A Critic Looks at the "Fan"

By W. J. IGOE

IN his witty essay, "Confessions of a Book Reviewer", the late George Orwell consoled himself for the depravity, as he saw it, of his chosen craft with the thought—"However, everyone in this life has someone else he can look down on, and I must say, from experience of both trades, that the book reviewer is better off than the film critic, who cannot even do his work at home, but has to attend trade shows at eleven in the morning and, with one or two honourable exceptions, is expected to sell his honour for a glass of inferior sherry".

The occasional film critic brings a more dispassionate vision to the screen. Orwell's picture is overdrawn, relies too much on comic shadows, like a Giles' cartoon in which the tenements are windowless, the inhabitants only dwarfish little boys destined for Nazism of some sort and a dandelion never reflects the sun in gashed and bare backyards. For one thing the sherry is good.

Upholstered Gloom

Yet there is something of truth in the mood of the paragraph, something claustrophobic, that characteristically was Orwell's and the thing he had in common with the mass-intellectuals whom he stimulated. When my colleague leaves England on her annual holiday and I deputise at the movies, my regard for her deepens appreciably. Each morning immediately after breakfast, and on occasions, being but human, after the night before, I am encased in upholstered gloom, warmed gently like a haddock for a gourmet, hundreds of shafts of blank colours or light and shade merging in an image and a disintegrating blare of sounds strikes and gushes, in jets, at me; I feel that if this were, as they say, my

steady job, I should have to re-organise my life. I should have to abandon the world; to maintain, even in its present patched-up way, my soul intact, I should need to place myself, each week-end, under the care of an aged, and consequently exquisitely experienced, retreat master. I might have to take extra vows of some kind, become a saint, an aspiration I presently take in a halting stride, relying on the grace of God reaching me through the ordinary channels.

During this period of three weeks, when I don't choose my own movies, I get the impression that the film, offspring of science and industrialism, is made without regard to the purpose of art and the nature of those who comprise its audience. In a word, I find the cinema inhuman. At the same time I like movies and believe that the cinema is potentially as great an art as any. The trouble commences, I believe, outside the cinema itself, primarily in the audience, *which includes those who make the pictures*, and in a system of values which the film, a traditionless medium, inherited in a period when Protestant culture had touched a nadir of banality unprecedented in history. Let us examine the way in which a film is brought to the attention of the public and its nature and presentation in the theatre.

He Likes Knitting!

We hear of films firstly by way of publicity sent out by the film companies. Most film critics avoid reading it. Mainly it is composed of stuff about the private lives of film actors and actresses. Mr. Errol Snooks, we are told presently working on the new film *Atomic Hearts*, collects postage stamps, cigarette pictures, likes

knitting and has a wife who loves cooking. Miss Pamela Pompom, presently on location in Liberia for the Warnamout epic *Passion Sabotaged*, is fond of "highbrow" reading and whenever she can escape from service to her public dashes off to her chalet in Beverley Hills to browse in the works of Mr. John Steinbeck, Mr. Aldous Huxley and Miss Katherine Windsor; she loves history too. This inane gossip bears, of course, no relationship to the facts of Miss Pompom or Mr. Snooks who are, most often, decent people trying to save money to educate their children or, occasionally, common "heels" whose good looks extracted them from the honourable service of Joe Lyon's customers and a blacking factory. But it reflects what the film companies believe their audiences wish their film actors to be; it is, as I wrote, stuff. It goes into the "fan-magazines"; the newspaper critic drops it on the office floor.

His next ration of publicity comes at the press showing of the pictures when he is given a synopsis which includes lists of actors and technicians and an outline, in basic English, of the story. This synopsis is illustrated by "stills" and reduced reproductions of posters to be displayed throughout the country as enticement to the "fan". And this brings me to one of the main sins of the moving picture industry.

Emphasis on Sex

The average cinema poster seems to be designed for the sole purpose of arresting the attention of oversexed morons. Often it bears scanty relationship to the film it advertises; more often it selects a brief incident from that film, distorts it into giving an impression that belies the nature of the picture and so misleads the member of the audience. One could enumerate examples by the score. I should like to refer to two that are on display at the moment. The film version of Henry James' beautiful novel "Washington Square", retitled *The Heiress*, is being advertised by a poster displaying Mr. Montgomery Clift nuzzling the shoulders of Miss Olivia de Havilland who appears to be swooning; this gives a false impression of the picture which, insofar as it keeps to the book, deals with spiritual values and where it

departs from it becomes old-fashioned melodrama. The other example occurs in the poster for *Treason*, the film based upon the persecution of Cardinal Mindszenty, in which a young woman's figure is spread-eagled next to the face of the actor who plays the part of the Hungarian primate. The fact that the figure is, for once, fully clothed is beside the point. The hint of "sex" is there and was deemed a necessary part of advertising by the sales-organisation of the film company involved. From such posters we may deduce the film-makers' values and their assessment of the motivating "tastes" of their audience.

The impression is reinforced when one enters the cinema. If I may make a comparison with the theatre, I shall refer the reader to the most popular branch of entertainment on the stage—the vaudeville house. When we attend one of Mr. Val Parnell's productions at the Palladium we know exactly what we are going to see. Mr. Parnell has an excellent service of publicity and his posters give a list of the names of his artists and brief accounts of their talents, for acrobatics, crooning, playing the zither or being a "funster". These are not prose-poems, but tell the truth. When we enter the theatre we may buy a further programme which gives us, in precise detail, notes on the show.

No such service is supplied at the movies. In most cinemas there is a supporting programme of short features which seldom are shown to critics and are presented arbitrarily, according, I suspect, to the bare needs of demand within the bare terms of supply.

Sheeplike Fans

Currently, for example, at the Odeon Theatre, Leicester Square, *The Mudlark* is being screened; when the writer attended a public showing of this picture it was the third item on a programme which included two short features, one of which was designed to inform me that Britain is supreme in the air, and the other, that *Rayon* is a splendid fabric for making young women's clothes. I am pleased by the news the first film conveyed, without necessarily believing it, and I was extremely bored by the spectacle of airplanes swooping across the screen for fifteen minutes,

presumably demonstrating the truth of the claim. In the second item I had no interest; yet I sat through it in the sheeplike mass of film fans whose apathy permits such impertinences on the part of the management.

As a theatre-goer I know that if Mr. Parnell (who since he is part of an old and living tradition would not think of insulting his patrons in this way) were to lecture us on the aircraft industry or tell us that Messrs. Austin Reed's shirtings are excellent, there might be a riot in the Palladium. He certainly would go out of business. But not the movie-maker, for unlike Mr. Parnell he has made not only his show; he has manufactured his audience and it is, if we may judge from the evidence, docile to the point of being sub-human and a prey to the appetites which are, to say the least of it, on an animal level.

It all gets back to the audience and film appreciation, as such, the reader will note, has not been mentioned in these notes. I have confined myself to matters of common good taste, which are inseparable from morals. The great problem which faces, I believe, the Catholic filmgoer, who *always should be the film critic on his own behalf*, is the influence of the mass modern mind, in his fellow-members of the audience, in the film makers and in the natural dynamic of the medium; he must keep his head, and it must be *his* head, not mine, or any professional critic's head, or even his parish priest's head, but his own. Its contents must be shaped into an instrument capable of appreciating God's truth and distinguishing it from the tawdry rubbish that all popular art, in varying measures, attempts to sell in our day.

Catholic Approach

The title of the series in which this article will appear is "A Positive Approach to the Cinema" and on the subject a critic, I suppose, should have something to say. Critical principles are not easily formulated but I believe we take from the cinema what we bring to it, enriched if the film is good, diminished if it is bad and we succumb to its violent blandishment. One must, therefore, as a Catholic, I suggest, bring a Catholic mind, an *adult* and consequently discriminating mind with an appreciation of man's dignity, which is our own, and man's

weakness, which is our own, and man's wickedness, which is our own, the realisation that we, potentially, are capable of committing all the sins and yet are destined for salvation. We must meditate with clean minds and clean hearts and if the cinema helps us, then it is good; if it opposes our meditation then it must be made clean.

What is a film, anyway? Like all works of art it is merely an assembly of detail, in sound and picture. And this mere thing may be great, as it was in *Monsieur Vincent*, *City Lights* and *Birth of a Nation*. When we think of the saint in the first of these, that bent figure walking in the village of pestilence, hear the heavy boots treading on the silence, as He brought the Mass, when we recall Chaplin, the clown in the battered garments of a bank clerk, wandering bravely on the skyline, and, in the Griffith's masterpiece, recall the great sweep of battle across the meadows of America, we may be sure that the film has much to say, to man at prayer, the man who would laugh, and the man who thrills to history.

When "Fans" Grow Up

All this it may say, more often, when film audiences become adult in mind and heart.

What can Catholics do? Be more positive I am asked! Well, they can try, occasionally, in the darkness before the screen lights up, to say a *Gloria*; the exercise has a startling way of putting Hollywood in perspective. They can read the Papal Letter on the cinema, with their minds wide-open so that they may digest it; then they can read all the Papal Letters on questions of our day; this will put the world in which we live into startling perspective.

The next, the second *essential*, I believe, for us is to support and sanely criticise the Catholic Film Institute, encourage and aid it, spiritually and materially, to establish in London and through its branches in the country, repertory cinemas where the best films, from Griffith to Carol Reed, can be seen and discussed so that we, all of us, may familiarise ourselves with a medium of art the Pope has ordered us to make good. It is, therefore, I would say, simply a duty.



WALT DISNEY

DISNEY is 49 this December. When he was five, a man named Bray was making animated cartoons for use on the screen. The first patent was taken out for them while he was still at school in Kansas City. But the film cartoon will always be associated with his name.

Real Life Animals

It was not so much that he developed a new technique of cartoon making as that he refined and improved existing ones. His first venture was in 1923, but by 1917 Max Fleischer had been turning out cartoons free from the jerkiness of earlier efforts. Disney brought a new artistic insight into cartoon making. His first major character was Mickey Mouse. This was based on a live mouse he had caught in the studio, tamed and observed. All his cartoon animals are based on real life observations of animals. This gives his cartoons their realism. Maybe this explains why the Tailwaggers Association of Hollywood awarded Pluto a bronze fire hydrant as the most promising dog actor of 1940. People think of Disney's animals as real animals. His cartoons are as alive as that.

Three other factors helped to make

KING OF CARTOONLAND

By

Alan Keenan, O.F.M.

him king of cartoonland. They were his use of sound, colour and continuity. In favour of sound it is well known that *Steamboat Willie*, made in 1928 was the first animated sound cartoon. He received also in 1941 a medal from the New York Schools of Music for his outstanding services to music (*Fantasia* was made in 1941). He next linked sound and colour in his "Silly Symphonies", begun in 1929. The last factor of continuity, of smoothness in the features he made, came increasingly through experience gained and refinement of technology. Thus in 1938 his studios developed the multiplane camera; in 1940 they received the award from the Society of Motion Picture Engineers for outstanding achievement in motion picture technology; and in the following year the Irving Thalberg award for consistent high quality productions.

He Loved to Draw

So far we have presented the evidence for Disney's mastery of sound, colour, action and realism. But what makes his genius is his artistic mastery of these elements. This leads us on to Disney, the man.

When he was a small boy he loved to draw and he drew very well. No member of the family on his father's or

mother's side had hitherto shown any artistic inclinations. His brothers all became business men. At high school he developed two talents which were both significant. The first was his drawing and the second was an aptitude for photography. He also studied cartoon work at night in the Academy of Fine Arts. After the first world war came his next significant step which was a job doing work for farm journals, drawing farmers and contented cows. When he was nineteen he got a new job, making animated advertising films. His interest in photography had not waned. His boss let him take home an old movie camera and he began experimenting at home making his own animated cartoons.

Left His Job

The idea came to him of leaving his job and forming his own company for the production of animated cartoons of fairy tales. Fifteen thousand dollars went into the formation of this company which was at Missouri. But the firm which had been distributing for him went bankrupt. He decided that Hollywood offered the best opportunities and considered how he could get from Kansas City to Hollywood. For since the company crash he had no money. This is what he did. He made a song film for a theatre organist and used the money he got to buy a second-hand movie camera. With the camera he photographed Kansas babies and sold the films to delighted Kansas mothers. That paid his rail fare to Hollywood. In Hollywood he hawked a cartoon around the studios. The studios referred him to their New York offices. The cartoon was sent East and Disney prepared like Kathleen Mavourneen to wait for years or maybe for ever for a New York assignment.

Hungry Genius

He got one. But for five years he languished, a hungry genius, in a Hollywood penthouse. Then Mickey Mouse was born and his fortunes changed. Distributors buzzed around him. They made tempting financial offers to sell his idea to them. But Disney refused. He rightly penetrated their box office motives and, artist as he was, clung fast to his individuality and to his ideas.

People have tried to interpret his

ideas in terms of art form and aesthetics. But Disney will have none of them. He creates what he thinks the common man will like, but of course he creates uncommonly well. He firmly refuses to belong to an artistic set, to walk in the cloudy heavens and claim the esoteric fellowship of the few. In many ways he is the happy extrovert. He seems a humble man, devoid of the pride which sometimes goes with the deeply artistic imagination. He is not the least eccentric and this is no mean achievement to a man of his creative originality.

Lost Vision

As in all forms of art there is in Disney's work a quality of what may be called redemption, a restoration of a vision we sometimes seem to have lost. For example, there was in *Bambi* a scene of a leaf falling in autumn. The leaf fell slowly with that haunting motion which is the ghost of summer. Disney showed it to us not as seen from below but as seen from above, falling to meet its reflection in a blue forest pool. In *Fantasia* numbers of people got an insight for the first time, perhaps, into the beauties of the "Pastoral". There was the heart-warming quality of the little puppet boy in *Pinocchio*; there are the millions of children who laughed at Grumpy and loved Snow White. That is the quality of redemption.

Uncanny Realism

Finally we may note that the critics have questioned the integrity of Disney's practice of introducing live actors into cartoon films. They say you cannot mix two such separate mediums. I suspect this criticism. The modern talkie is a mixture of two mediums anyway, as people are finding out in their reaction to the Chaplin films in the recent revival. Opera is a fusion of mediums and to a certain extent so is television. Perhaps the critics were really reacting against the unrealism of live actors when seen in contrast against the uncanny realism of Disney's cartoon animals. For myself I would like to see it put to the test. I would like to see Thumper the Rabbit and Charlie Chaplin co-starred together, with Charlie, perhaps, as a dipsomaniac and Thumper as a miniature Harvey.

How Much Have You Learnt?

asks ANDREW BUCHANAN

We now complete the first half of the Course without having entered a film studio, peered at cameras, or discussed stars, because we have dealt with first things first and devoted our study to the size and shape of the industry. Before proceeding with the second half, which is going to deal with film production, I advise the student to test his knowledge to date. By now he should know the ramifications of the industry, why it is divided into three interrelated groups; how all films are classified as features or shorts, and how their distribution channels are divided into theatrical and non-theatrical and why. Without such knowledge the student is ill-prepared to explore the world of film-making. There are already far too many people who know too little about film fundamentals and who rush into production before being able to tell the difference between negative and positive, or, more important, how films can regain the money which has been spent to make them. That is why we have been solely concerned with the structure of the industry until now, and why the student should also be able to answer the following questions:

How many cinemas are there (approximately) in the world?

And how many in Britain?

How many millions visit the world's cinemas weekly, and how many go in Britain?

What is the average age of the habitual filmgoer?

Why does film exert a more powerful influence than radio?

What is the size of standard film—and of sub-standard? How many sub-standard sizes are in use?

What is the running speed of film in cinemas?

Why are so many films which appear on sub-standard film first produced on standard size film and reduced?

Can projection both make and mar a film?

Was the double-feature programme introduced into Britain by public demand?

What is the average length of: a feature film—a short film—a newsreel?

If a play is presented both on stage and screen what would be the most obvious difference in presentation?

Is there any one factor preventing film becoming a *universal* medium of expression?

Are original screen stories preferable to adaptations of novels and plays?

Is non-theatrical distribution highly developed? Which kind of organisations use it to a maximum degree?

Are educational films successful in classrooms?

Will educational films eventually supersede teachers?

Has the production of special films for children been successful, and if not, why not?

Can you define the fundamental difference between films produced in France, in Italy and in Britain?

Can music be more than a background in films?

Is the religious film making progress?

Is there a difference between a religious film and a film about religion?

The above questions have been picked at random from the subject-matter of previous chapters, and if the student can answer all or nearly all of them, he is ready to learn about the making of films. But he should never lose sight of the important fact that the underlying purpose of this Course is religious.

First, it is designed to increase the critical faculties of the filmgoer; secondly, to urge the formation of film discussion groups to develop film appreciation; thirdly, to encourage spiritual values on the screen by increasing a demand for them, and fourthly to steadily advance the plan of forming producing units composed of men and women who have become technically and artistically proficient in film-making and who are filled with the inspiration to devote themselves to creating films which shall proclaim the Christian Message ceaselessly.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

KING SOLOMON'S MINES

Starring: Deborah Kerr, Stewart Granger. Richard Carlson.
Producer: Sam Zimbalist.
Directors: Compton Bennett and Andrew Marton. **Distributors:** M. - G. - M. **Certificate:** U.
Category: B. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

I do not consider it my business to say whether this film accords with Rider Haggard's classic novel, for a film and a novel are different mediums. I do consider it my business to say, right away, that this is a rattling good movie. It moves and moves all the time. There is not a hitch, as far as I could see, in the rhythm of its movement, sequence glides into sequence, like cloud gliding into cloud. Its superb colouring makes it a lovely thing to look at and to my mind there is nothing wrong with its story value. It is full of lively and interesting characters and the element of suspense is held to the end.

Men Will Be Boys!

To accompany Allan Quartermain and his adventurers on the most hazardous African Safari of Quartermain's career . . . through growling jungles and infested swamps . . . across rivers and rocks . . . over snow-capped mountains . . . to see them nearly trampled to death by a stampede of animals . . . to see them deserted by their frightened bearers and betrayed by the white man, Smith, is an exciting experience (a boyish experience, if you like, but men will be boys!). The acting is good and the whole thing with one exception, has the quality of verisimilitude. Deborah Kerr is the fly in the ointment.

I have often sung the praises of Deborah Kerr, a most distinguished actress, but this is not her sort of film. She doesn't act or look or even pose as a woman who has undertaken this dangerous journey as an act of repara-

tion for the wrong she has done her husband, Henry Curtis. Despite her "frightful experiences" in the jungle, she always remains as well groomed and as meek as one of those nice girls who believe they are being tough when they go for a picnic into the country.

In this film Deborah is just playing a game. From the beginning one knew, of course, that Deborah would succumb to the tough charms and the rugged arms of Stewart Granger.

E.

FRENCHIE

Starring: Joel McCrea and Shelley Winters, with Paul Kelly, Elsa Lanchester, Marie Windsor, John Russell and John Emery. A Universal - International Picture.
Director: Louis King. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 80 minutes.

The credit notes tell us that *Frenchie* gives us "the 'shocking' Shelley Winters in her first technicolor film". The screen shows us a glamorous young lady in the overdressed fashions of the late nineteenth century; to my mind, more capable of suggestiveness than the frankly utilitarian styles of the modern miss. The story demands that Miss Winters conduct a gambling saloon called the Scarlet Angel in the course of which she arouses the chivalrous emotions of all the cowpunchers and goldminers for miles around. The result is that the owner of the gambling den on the next territory comes over to buy her out. He gets shot by the law-abiding sheriff, Joel McCrea. You can guess why.

The film is pretty to look at and for those who like Wild West yarns which are not too wild, doubtless entertaining. The most shocking thing I saw was a catch-as-catch-can fight between two women—a revolting sight even when it is intended to be funny, as in this case.

V.

I'LL GET BY

Starring: June Haver, William Lundigan, Gloria de Haven, Dennis Day. **Producer:** William Perlberg.

Director: Richard Sale. Presented 20th Century-Fox in Technicolor.

Certificate: U. *Category:* B.

Wm. Shakespeare: What fools these mortals be.

Dr. Johnson: In a theatre an orange may have a purpose other than that for which it was primarily designed.

Captain Cook: . . . a vast continent, strange and unsuspected of the ancients.

Sir Walter Raleigh: Overmuch weavel in the biscuit occasioned lack of appetite among the crew.

Oliver Cromwell: Cut them down in the name of the Lord.

Wall St. Financier: If the moon were a balloon, I'd bounce it.

Pithecanthropus Erectus (Does that fox you?): Wait here baby, I need a drink.

T.: Forgive the levity, these films take me that way. A song plugger plugs his songs and gets the lady. I enjoyed the back-chat, but oh! the songs!

T.

ALL ABOUT EVE

Starring: Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, George Sanders, Celeste Holm, with Cary Merrill, Hugh Marlowe.

Producer: Darryl F. Zanuck.

Director: Joseph L. Mankiewicz.

Distributors: 20th Century-Fox.

Certificate: A. *Category:* B.

Running time: 138 minutes.

Don't be put off by the running time; nor by the fact that this is a film which takes nearly all that time to depict how Eve came to win the Sarah Siddons award for acting. From the very beginning, when George Sanders speaks a kind of prologue-commentary, there is wit and satire in abundance, good line after line unflaggingly. Towards the end the interest rather shifts from dialogue to drama, to the unveiling of

the egotistic scheming and ruthless exploitation of friendship by which Eve has secured her success.

The theatre has not spared itself. Indeed I can imagine indignant protests from those who are impervious to wit and satire, calling the film an insult and a libel on an honourable profession. Mr. Mankiewicz has written an original script as well as directing the picture and it is a brilliant piece of work, astringent without being excessively bitter, and definite, if implicit, in its moral attitude.

The actress who is not so young, the dresser who speaks her mind, the dyspeptic and Semitic producer, the ambitious understudy, the caustic critic, the posing and prosing of the theatrical profession—what could have been so hackneyed is here so live and individual.

But this is not a film for me to write about; it is one for you to see, and listen to.

Q.

CRISIS

Starring: Cary Grant, José Ferrer and Paula Raymond, with Signe Hasso, Ramon Novarro, Antonio Moreno, Leon Ames and Gilbert Roland. An M.-G.-M. Picture.

Director: Richard Brooks.

Certificate: A. *Category:* B.

Running time: 95 minutes.

This story of an eminent American brain surgeon who is kidnapped to perform an intricate operation on the dictator of an unspecified Latin American country has obvious similarities with *State Secret* but it has also equally obvious differences. I imagine that in any case, the films were made quite independently of one another. *State Secret* was an escape story whereas *Crisis* is much more an excursion into the minds of dictators.

Cary Grant as the surgeon is allowed a wider scope for serious character than is usually his fate. José Ferrer, whom most readers will remember as the Dauphin in Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, gives a really brilliant study of the egotism which brings some men to the tyrannical leadership of their fellows

and sustains them into thinking that they are conferring a benefit by their iron discipline.

There is some interesting exterior photography in which the camera has fixed for us impressions of crowds, open squares, scenes of people at prayer, the beginnings of revolution and a final sequence in which the dead dictator is dragged ignominiously by the heels that has much of the feeling and not a little of the merit of the much-praised early Russian films.

V.

THE CLOUDED YELLOW

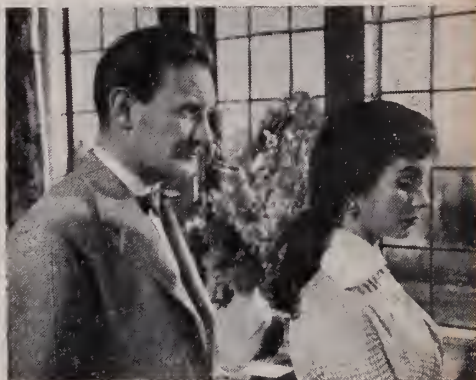
Starring: Jean Simmons, Trevor Howard and Sonia Dresdel, with Barry Jones, Kenneth More, Geoffrey Keen and Maxwell Reed.
A Betty Box Production.
Director: Ralph Thomas.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 95 minutes.

This is a film which sets out to entertain an easy-going public prepared not to enquire too closely into the probabilities of the story of a girl whose strange behaviour is put down to the fact that she found her parents dead when a small child, apparently having committed suicide. When an ex-Secret Service man comes to catalogue butterflies at the country house where she lives, it needs little experience in the ways of cinema to know that all sorts of things are going to happen and that all kinds of people are going to act strangely. They do. The Secret Service man leads the girl and the police and the Secret Service a fine dance and chase all over the north of England, thus giving us a chance to see some fine scenery. I enjoyed it all: both the chase and the scenery.

Unemployed Secret Agent!

Trevor Howard has given up being a doctor (*Brief Encounter*; *So Well Remembered*; *Green for Danger*; *The Passionate Friends*) and after a spell in the Army (*The Third Man*) has taken to cataloguing things: antiques

in *The Golden Salamander* and butterflies in the present case. The Clouded Yellow is the name of a specimen having some symbolic connection with Jean Simmons, apparently. Needless to say, Trevor Howard manages to convince us that he is really an out-of-work M.I.5 type, for he is an exceptionally competent actor. He even helps us to overlook the incongruities in the screenplay. Jean



Trevor Howard . . . Jean Simmons

Simmons still leaves me puzzled. Is she or is she not an actress? The direction in this film is not a fair test; for the actors, with one lamentable exception, are all clever co-operators with, perhaps, the slightest tendency to overplay in the case of Barry Jones and Sonia Dresdel. Miss Simmons wears what appears to be a brunette version of her Ophelia wig. Later she uses her own urchin-cut coiffure and comes to life. Still, the part calls for some peculiarly inane expressions which, perhaps, lets her out.

There is a peach of a scene in which Trevor Howard is being interviewed by an Appointments Officer, brilliantly played by Richard Wattis.

Not For Children

Though the Censor gave the film a U Certificate, there is a rather unpleasant scene at the close of the story where a man chases the heroine over a station roof with a meat hook and then falls and is run over by a train. Not to be seen, therefore, by impressionable children. Otherwise, good value for your entertainment tax.

V.

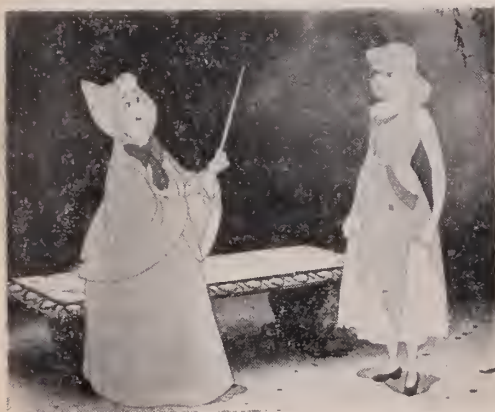
FILM OF "Cinderella"



The invitation arrives



The ugly



Good fairy to the rescue



The midnight hour has struck

MONTH ella''



bart . . .



ball



. . . leaving Cinderella to her dreams



The castle of her dreams



The slipper search ends

(Reviewed overleaf)

CINDERELLA

A Walt Disney film in technicolor.

Distributors: R.K.O. Radio.

Certificate: U. **Category:** D.

Running time: 74 minutes.

When the British present a fairy story in dramatic form they usually—though I have not forgotten *The Glass Slipper*—pad it out to great size with broad humour, topicalities and music hall turns, and call it pantomime. Walt Disney has avoided the pitfall of excessive length and has successfully used as his supplementary matter the doings of the sort of artificial animals with which his name is specially connected. And it is in this sphere that *Cinderella* is at its best. Two sequences have the quality of ballet and are most enjoyable: when Cinderella is dressed by the mice, first in her neat working clothes when she gets up in the morning—she is never in rags as I thought she ought to have been—and then in the ball dress which her sisters will not allow her to wear. And Gus, the mouse, is a real acquisition to the ranks of Disney characters.

A comparison with *Snow White* is inevitable. Indeed, one has the feeling that some of the cast of the earlier film are playing again. So, *Snow White* is Cinderella. Prince Charming repeats his rôle. The Wicked Queen is the Stepmother. (A bulldog from a short cartoon has been metamorphosed into Lucifer, an odious cat. And Pluto plays the small part of Bruno.)

Those who saw *Snow White* when it was re-issued, already realised the advance which has been made with the years from some of its technical crudities. And *Cinderella* is wisely free, as *Snow White* was not, from the intrusion of the horrific. (One wee thing near me was momentarily in great distress, but only because Cinderella had no dress to go to the ball; presumed familiarity with the story could not allay the immediate poignancy—an unconscious and endearing tribute to dramatic effect.) The music by David, Hoffman and Livingston has tuneful moments, but can never hope to rival Churchill's score for *Snow White*.

Disney is said to have used Perrault's version. But the opening words are not quite as I remember Perrault. "Once upon a time in a faraway kingdom . . ." says the film. But I felt that it was not far enough away from U.S.A. The courts of kings in fairy tales were meant to be wonderful and fascinating. I have no objection if, like real courts, they have a comic side. But here they seem almost entirely ridiculous. Text and action suggest that Cinderella could think of nothing better than marrying a prince. But one critic described Disney's *Snow White* as "a Hollywood cutie". And I certainly felt that his Cinderella would really have regarded her adventures as regrettably undemocratic and that the perfect ending would have been to find that the prince was not a prince at all but Robert Taylor or Van Johnson in disguise.

Q.

TO PLEASE A LADY

Starring: Clark Gable and Barbara

Stanwyck. An M.-G.-M. Picture.

Certificate: A. **Category:** A.

Running time: 90 minutes.

There are some things connected with the physical manifestations of the love of man for woman which are too intimate for the highway publicity provided by the screen. Though a little wandering around studios soon teaches one that the physical contortions necessary for the unfortunate actors to "register" the appropriate degree of intimacy in osculation are entirely phoney, it is all the sadder to think that they go through such revolting embraces because the producers think that is what the public wants.

The story is of two middle-aged persons, the one a gossip-column writer, the other a racing motorist, who both have in common a desire to get to the top regardless of the feelings of others. To see the two middle-aged players who fill these rôles trying to satisfy what the producers say the public wants leaves me with a sick feeling. What some people will do for money.

V.

TRIPOLI

Starring: Maureen O'Hara, John Payne and Howard da Silva, with Philip Reer and Grant Withers. A Paramount Picture. **Director:** Will Price. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 96 minutes.

One advantage of "historical" films is that they induce the conscientious critic to check the facts. Thus a film which tells me that American navy boats were engaged in keeping the Mediterranean free in 1805 sent me to my American history books. Alas, I could find no corroborative evidence. It is true that Britain was blockading the coasts of France during the war with Napoleon and America resented the resulting lack of freedom but there is no mention of this in *Tripoli*. Maybe we are taking it too seriously. It is a technicolorful dose of Maureen O'Hara as a French Countess with an Irish-American accent who is trying to induce the deposed Pasha Hamet to marry her but is saved from such a fate by the bad manners of John Payne as an American Marine Corps lieutenant.

The colour is fierce and so is the fighting. The trade papers would describe this film as "entertaining fare for indiscriminating patrons". And so do we. V.

SHE SHALL HAVE MURDER

Starring: Rosamund John, Derrick de Marney, Mary Jerrold, Felix Aylmer. **Producers:** Derrick de Marney and Guido Coen. **Director:** Daniel Birt. **Distributors:** Independent Film Distributors Ltd. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 90 minutes.

This is a "Whodunit" with a welcome touch of originality. Someone in a solicitor's office in Kensington "dunit". Who? We are kept guessing right up to the end, which is a big point in the film's favour. We are also able to accept as real people the various characters who work in the office and who become involved in the crimes, which is another point in the film's favour.

I thought the acting was very good indeed; perhaps it is not ungenerous to

suggest that Derrick de Marney is inclined to overplay and to say that it would have been better for the audience if he didn't attempt to speak when drinking pots of beer; after all, people do like to hear what a fellow is saying. Rosamund John as the girl who is writing a novel and Felix Aylmer as the dry-dusty-absent-minded solicitor are particularly good. There is also some good by-play. For instance: the copper who takes evidence from Dagobert (Derrick de Marney).

Not much money, I imagine, was spent on this film. There is a look of technical cheapness about it which means that all the credit must go to the players, for the thing does get across. E.

BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND DAWN

Starring: Mark Stevens, Edmond O'Brien and Gale Storm, with Donald Buka, Anthony Ross and Gale Robbins. **Director:** Gordon Douglas. A Columbia Picture. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 89 minutes.

Gordon Douglas also directed James Cagney's latest exercise in sadism but although this film, too, deals with gangsters and policemen, there is a minimum of brutality for its own sake and while there is no lack of excitement, it has a healthy flavour and the moral of the film is that even policemen have to learn and practise restraint. For, as Gale Storm says to Edmond O'Brien, after his best friend has been killed, "An embittered policeman is a dangerous person".

The story is an uncomplicated one about two men in the Radio Patrol who love the same girl; who do their duty; who run the risks that help to keep the public safe in bed o' nights; who, finally, run an escaped murderer to earth as efficiently and relentlessly as the medical squad would isolate a dangerous germ.

The film neither calls for nor receives anything extraordinary in the way of acting but it is a fast-moving, brilliantly photographed yarn about cops and robbers, made with the competence and élan customary with Hollywood products of this kind.

V.



THE NAKED HEART

Starring: Michele Morgan, Kieron Moore, Françoise Rosay.
Producer: Nelson Scott. **Director:** Marc Allegret. **Distributors:** British Lion. **Certificate:** U.
Category: B. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

I do not subscribe to a popular belief that any fool can play the film critic; but I do believe that any film critic can play the fool, or make a fool of himself. In coming to the rescue of this film which the critics have pitched overboard, I may be making a fool of myself but (at least) I have my reasons. In spite of patches of bad scripting, some bad acting (the sequence in which the doctor visits the dying mother is *very* bad) and a queer mixture of accents, I found a certain charm, cleanness and catholicity about this picture. It is a love story with a difference. With *this* difference that love is not made out to be all powder, paint and passion, but something that is mysterious, deep and spiritual.

The story centres around a pretty, idealistic, Catholic girl, Maria

(Top Left) After rescuing the Suprenants Francois (Philippe Lemaire) is congratulated.

(Top Right) Maria with her father and Robert, who loves her.

(Bottom Left) Mother explains to daughter that love between man and woman has to be made.

Chapdelaine (Michele Morgan), just home from convent school, who finds herself caught up in the mesh (or mess!) of several loves. This, of course, is nothing new, but the situation is handled in a way which, for the film-world with its pseudo-love and pseudo-sex, is new and quite extraordinary. The idea at the root of this film is that love is a mystery (note the simple yet profound advice which the priest offers to Maria); something spiritual; something that a couple "make" for themselves, day by day, by mutual loving, forbearance, service and so on.

If all mothers explained to their daughters what Laura Chapdelaine (Françoise Rosay) explained to her daughter, Maria, there would be fewer broken hearts and broken marriage vows. It was only when Maria's heart had been stripped naked by suffering that she learnt the true meaning of love and married the right man.

This is a film which could have been and should have been so very much better. It is obvious that something went wrong somewhere. I cannot believe that such a good director as Marc Allegret is to blame. Perhaps it was a question of too many minds wanting to have their own way? However, there is nothing wrong with the exterior photography which is exciting: the camera operator, Robert Walker, deserves full marks. I think many people overlook a banal script when the heart of a film is clean and Christian.

E.

HIGHLY DANGEROUS

Starring: Margaret Lockwood and Dane Clark. **Written by** Eric Ambler. **Producer:** Anthony Darnborough. **Director:** Roy Baker. **A Two Cities Film.** **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

This film is in some ways very much like *State Secret*, but it is a too devitalised and dehydrated version of that exciting film about the penetration and escape from a police state to do anything else but disappoint. The story is of a lady doctor (Margaret Lockwood)—or rather, "entomologist", to be exact, which means a bug, germ and insect specialist—who has to enter a police state in order to capture specimens of insects which were being bred for war purposes. There were plenty of opportunities of the film to live up to its name of *Highly Dangerous*, but none were taken. No situation was quite plausible and no audience will be sufficiently gullible to get the thrills it is supposed to.

The last minutes of the film were switched over, Hitchcock fashion, from thriller to comedy and although no one turned a hair for the first eighty minutes of the film, not a few had a good laugh or two in the remaining eight, where the humorless horrors of a real police state were contrasted with our own somewhat aggravating and amusing customs, police and rationing regulations. On this side of the iron curtain we are still free to laugh.

G.

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE

Starring: Clifton Webb, Joan Bennett, Robert Cummings, Edmund Gwenn, with Joan Blondell, Gigi Perreau, Jack La Rue, Harry von Zell, Tommy Rettig. **Producer:** William Perlberg. **Director:** George Seaton. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

The worst that can be said about this film is that it might encourage in those who know no better the idea that angels are mythical or alternatively that they are semi-human. But let us be thankful for small mercies. In spite of

the title there is no attempt, as in some other films, to portray any region other than earth. And though Clifton Webb and Edmund Gwenn are no angels except in name they are on the side of the angels.

Their mission is to save a childless marriage from breaking up. Mr. Bolton maintains that he and his wife belong to the theatre and for that reason must postpone having a family. Mrs. Bolton is not so sure. The senior angel aptly describes the idea as "unmitigated hogwash".

Before the angels triumph some amusing sidelines are introduced. Jack La Rue provides a good burlesque of a film gangster. The way in which plays are financed is heavily satired. Better still is Charles Lane's portrayal of a tax inspector.

Mr. Gwenn's individuality is wasted as he is merely a feed or foil to Mr. Webb. And what was it about Joan Bennett that somehow suggested Margaret Lockwood?

Against the sound moral basis of this comedy must be set a lack of delicacy. The Boltons' marriage may have been made in heaven but it seemed to be thoroughly earthy.

Q.

TWO WEEKS WITH LOVE

Starring: Jane Powell, Richardo Montalban, Louis Calhern, Ann Harding. **Producer:** Jack Cummins. **Director:** Roy Rowland. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 92 minutes.

This is a sort of skit on love's young dream. It is an unpretentious little piece which I found amusing. The children who appear gave me a good deal of laughter.

E.

IN THE WORLD

- * There are 100,000 picture theatres
- * Admitting 235 million patrons each week.
- * 146 million pounds capital are invested in films every year.
- * The film industry comes only third in economic importance. After wheat and coal and before the motor car industry.

THE MEN

Starring: Marlon Brando and Teresa Wright, with Everett Sloane, Virginia Farmer, Jack Webb and Richard Erdman. A Stanley Kramer Production. **Director:** Fred Zinnemann. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 90 minutes approx.

This is a very good film spoilt by a silly, catch-penny title. It is made by Fred Zinnemann who gave us *The Seventh Cross* and *The Search*. It is



Marlon Brando and Teresa Wright

produced by Stanley Kramer who produced *Home of the Brave*, like *The Search*, an O.C.I.C. prize-winner. It is evidently, therefore, worth looking at on its pedigree value alone. It will not let you down. It is an honest, unsentimental, harrowing story of what happens to men who have to re-adjust their lives after the war has left them paralysed from the waist down (paraplegics is the technical definition of such cases). The most impressive portrayal in the film is that of Everett Sloane as the doctor in charge of the hospital. He gives us an almost embarrassingly realistic picture of the problems which face the medical pro-

fession; the difficulties they are up against arising from the impatience of the patients, the sullenness, the over-optimism, the despair. He states some welcome truths about the rôle of the doctor, truths which modern materialism all too readily diminishes. Although there is much cynical comment and some rowdy by-play, this is basically a religious film; one which focuses attention on purpose in life.

Tenderly Convincing

It does not give us any cheap miracles of healing for a happy ending; instead it gives us a lesson in humility and forbearance in the lines with which it closes. Ken, who has resisted all attempt on the part of his wife to share his burden, is asked by her: "Do you want me to help you?" Quietly and with something more than resignation he says: "Yes, please!"

Teresa Wright as the girl who marries Ken, is tenderly convincing and without any studio tricks. Marlon Brando as Ken is, perhaps, too mechanically resentful, but he is admirably surrounded by a bunch of cheery patients, some of them real, and all of them good actors. Perhaps the doctor and the patients shout a bit too much in public in the wards, but, when you see the film, you will think they have some excuse. All the more pity, therefore, to let the publicity posters and the inept title lead serious cinemagoers to think it less good than it is.

V.

THE MAN ON THE EIFFEL TOWER

Starring: Charles Laughton, Franchot Tone, Burgess Meredith, Robert Hutton, the city of Paris, with Jean Wallace, Patricia Roc, Belita. **Producer:** Irving Allen. **Director:** Burgess Meredith. **Distributors:** Independent Film. In Ansco Color. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 82 minutes.

Here is a sad waste of talent. I fear that, like me, you will be unmoved until towards the end of the film. Not even the city of Paris, listed as a star and appearing as frequently as the

others, seems to be giving its best. When one of the characters—perhaps it is significant that I can't remember which—sat down at perhaps the very table at the Café des Deux Magots from which I like to contemplate St. Germain des Près, I just wasn't thrilled. I merely felt that Clark Gable ought to be dropping in for a chat with the other two about the good old days on the *Bounty*.

The story is from Georges Simenon's "A Battle of Nerves" and Charles Laughton is Inspector Maigret. The preposterous inefficiency of one of his assistants provides a little comic relief. To indicate that they have the Roman Catholic religion in France, some choir-boys in cottas and red cassocks walk along the pavement. The occasion is a little obscure but as far as I could make out they were singing "Oh, what the joy and the glory must be" from Hymns Ancient and Modern.

The end is unexpected and for once an anticlimax is commendable. Another original touch is that no one speaks either French or broken English.

The film is not contemptible but it misfires and is hardly above second feature standard.

Q.

FRIGHTENED CITY

Starring: Evelyn Keyes, Charles Korvin, William Bishop.

Producer: Robert Cohn. **Director:** Earl McEvoy. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 75 minutes.

Although I have suggested that this film should go into category "B", no type of person is going to gain much from seeing it. Apparently the Americans believe in vaccination like most others. This thin tale is the vehicle for a long-drawn-out exhortation to go in for the big scratch in a spirit of social responsibility. The background of life depicted in the film is so sordid and uninspiring that the exhortation loses point. Without being unduly superior it is difficult to avoid the impression that there is something to be said for plagues. In any case it is difficult to understand what all the excitement is about. Glasgow had an outbreak of smallpox not long ago and coped with it without undue inter-

ference with the national life. According to this story a woman jewel-smuggler (Evelyn Keyes) brings smallpox into the U.S.A. Her private life is involved in the usual eternal triangle and there is murder besides plague in the air. The rest of the story is occupied with the endeavours of mayors and doctors to vaccinate the city and find the jewel-smuggler who is spreading disease. The only possibility of a plot would be in the lives of the few supporting characters and they are far too dull for us to care whether they are shot or not. They are shot and we are not surprised to find that the city is saved.

J. C.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Starring: The Four Marx Brothers.

Director: Norman McLeod.

Presented by Paramount Pictures.

Category: B.

A Catholic speaker in Hyde Park once read a passage from a book dealing with social problems and then challenged his Communist heckler to tell him whether the quotation was from Karl Marx or from a Papal Encyclical. The heckler guessed wrong.

Is the following from a Marx Brothers' film or from "Vigilanti Cura"?

"Half my kingdom for half a horse. No, on second thoughts, threequarters for a quarter. Twenty per cent discount and the rest on account. No offers—then reverse the charges."

"You'll not make a monkey out of me."

"I know, don't tell me. You haven't any."

"Say, Capn., you maka mistake bad. I sing a song, no."

Oof, oof, bang.

"Never mind the children, bring me to the women."

If the Marx fan thinks it comes from the Marx Brothers, he will applaud it. If he thinks it comes from the Pope he will ignore it. That is one of my complaints. Marxism is a religion. You can't argue with a devotee.

But in any case why pick on me to review a Marx Brothers' re-issue twice in two months.

T.

HARVEY

Starring: James Stewart, with Josephine Hull, Charles Drake, Cecil Kellaway, Jesse White, Victoria Horne, Wallace Ford and Peggy Dow. **Producer:** John Beck. **Director:** Henry Koster. A Universal-International Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: A. Running time: 104 minutes.*

It may be some disadvantage for purposes of comparison, not to have been able to see the play but it does leave one free to approach the film without preconceived ideas.

For their enthusiasm and in their occasional disregard for much that the world looks upon as practical, the saints were often held to be mad. So much so that the saint in the making is often dismissed as unusual or abnormal and necessarily, therefore, at least a little mad. Here in this film we have no attribution of motive such as explains the saint to us. Elwood P. Dowd (James Stewart) drinks a lot and is welcome in all the "low joints". He is welcome because he is harmless but also because he is invariably kind and considerate to the most ordinary of men. It is his invisible companion, Harvey, a six-foot-three rabbit who has taught him about life and people. It is an innocent delusion and the result is the spread of amiability through the impact of a completely selfless man on the lives of the hustling, worried mortals that he meets.

Gentle Lunatic

The well-sustained comedy revolves round the impulsive attempt of his sister to get him into a "home". The consequences are of the farcical order. Finally the ultimate question is posed: shall the gentle lunatic be given an injection which will change his character into that of just another ordinary man who is reputed sane.

It is a highly amusing film but also, I think, a good one in the moral sense. It is useful sometimes to query the validity of what the world is apt to regard as strength and success. And it is useful, too, to ponder awhile, even as the result of a comedy, over this question of medical or surgical interference with human personality.

James Stewart gives a wholly charming portrayal of Elwood P. His seriousness is never mock seriousness. His features give an expression of confident and friendly awareness of Harvey. Josephine Hull as the sister, Veta Louise, gives a grand performance in the bustling manner, a ripe subject for the slings and arrows. Peggy Dow intelligently provides the beauty in the mixture. But all the team play up well.

Although the film is certificated U, I cannot give it a B category because of the degree of frankness in the description of the kind of questions that psychologists ask. Anyway, children would be happier if they saw the gigantic rabbit, but, of course, nobody does.

X.

KISS TOMORROW GOODBYE

Starring: James Cagney, Luther Adler, Ward Bond, and Barbara Payton. A Warner Brothers Film. **Director:** Gordon Douglas. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 100 minutes approx.*

One of the trade papers ingenuously says of this film that the "characters are extremely well served by their players, notably James Cagney in another of his studies in vicious brutality, complete with unabashed violence to femininity". As it is mainly concerned with how very nearly an escaped convict came to blackmailing a detective inspector and holding the State to ransom, it is a little naive to have the film listed as essentially moral on the grounds that the crook is eventually killed, thus proving that crime does not pay. Crime may not pay but sadism, apparently, does, to judge by the affluent position of the gentleman concerned in the production of such uplift.

Incidentally, a case for the sociological enquiry. Having missed the Press Show, I had to see this film some days later. At eleven o'clock in the morning, the cheaper part of the cinema (my part) was filled with young men around twentyish who all laughed delightedly and hysterically whenever

James delivered doses of his celebrated "unabashed violence". Who were these young gentlemen and why were they able to indulge their craving for sadism at eleven o'clock in the morning?

Anyway, you have been warned. If you like seeing people knocked about, this is your film.

V.

PRETTY BABY

Starring: Dennis Morgan, Betsy Drake, Edmund Gwenn, Zachary Scott. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Director:** Bretaigne Windust. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** About an hour.

Here we have a harmless nonsense which is none the worse for raising smiles rather than laughs—you can, if you wish, hear the dialogue that way.

Betsy Drake has the ideal comic part insofar as she has to be the sweetly earnest *ingenue* who innocently sets in motion the whole preposterous series of mishaps. The advertising business of Sam Morley (Dennis Morgan) and Barry Holmes (Zachary Scott) hangs on their handling of the sales campaign of Baxter's Baby Food and, more than incidentally, on the fatherly, almost maudlin, infatuation of Cyrus Baxter (Edmund Gwenn) for Patsy Douglas (Betsy Drake) who has a doll which he believes is her child. He is touched for good and all because she has named it Cyrus Baxter Douglas.

We won't go into the complications of the story. The acting is spirited all round, but it pained me to see and hear an actor of Edmund Gwenn's parts in this piece of effervescent nougat.

The music has a nice line in sardonic humour and in that provides an astringent quality which could, if necessary, deflect the shafts of a hostile critic. A handy little bit of insurance, maybe?

By the way, after a night of office toil with her boss, Patsy finds her belated homecoming "clean somehow, not mouldy as usual but kinda spiritual". Part of a satire? I don't know, but I have my suspicions and I'm keeping them to myself. I find it "kinda spiritual" so.

X.

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Starring: Lew Ayres, Louis Wolheim, Raymond Griffith, Slim Summer-ville and John Wray. **Director:** Lewis Milestone. **Distributors:** Eros Films Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 101 minutes.

It is a sad commentary on the times we live in that this film, from Erich Maria Remarque's famous novel, first shown in the early thirties, and then acclaimed as a searing commentary on the futility of war, should now arouse suspicions lest it be used as part of the subversive campaign to undermine Western morale! It seems so sad and so senseless that even Catholics now find themselves having to think twice lest their advocacy of peace be liable to dangerous interpretations.

Glory of War

The story of seven German school-boys who are persuaded by their school-master that war is gloriously coloured with pomp and circumstance and who rapidly discover that it is grim and demands something more than patriotism, retains its power as a document against war without, I think, being more subversive than, say, David Jones' *In Parenthesis*, the war book which above all others puts the point of view of the man in the trenches into its proper perspective.

The film, as a film, wears less well than the story it tells. The emotional sentimentality is pitched in a key which even Hollywood would now think extravagant. There is some beautiful camerawork amid the brutality and carnage. The bitterness of the observation is sharp but there is compensation in the warmth of the human relationships of the varied characters. Lew Ayres' tenderness as the young leader of the schoolboys is offset by the gruffer affection of Louis Wolheim's veteran scrounger.

The film is by no means one for young or impressionable people but it should make interesting viewing for all who are not afraid of thought mixed with their entertainment.

V.

FATIMA IN FOCUS

During the month ending November 24th, 1950, *Pilgrimage to Fatima* was shown to enthusiastic audiences at the Hammer Theatre in Wardour Street. So great was the demand for admission that extra showings had to be arranged and then, during the last week, another small cinema across the road had to be hired to take the overflow.

Every type and condition of person has come to see the film: university students, nurses, ladies from Poplar and ladies from Millwall, groups of parishioners arriving in coaches, queues of schoolchildren; people accustomed to normal cinema attendance, people who seldom or never darken the brilliantly lighted doors of the commercial cinema. Most of them have gone away thoughtfully; some with eager enquiries as to the best way to get to Fatima itself. One dear old lady from East London, overwhelmed by the penitential exercises of the devout Portuguese peasants at the Chapel of the Apparitions, was muttering as she went out: "Not much chance of people like us getting to heaven!" She did not realise that she, too, in her own way, was being inspired to do something for Our Lord. Another charming but naïve lady was telling her neighbour that "they always have Roman Catholic pictures at this cinema!"; to which her companion replied, "I wonder if they have thought of asking Mr. Crosby; he sings quite nicely, too!" As for "Roman Catholic picture": it just happens that we have been associated with the showing of three Catholic films at the Hammer Theatre: *Visitation* and *Out of the Darkness* in addition to *Pilgrimage to Fatima*.

Quite young children have watched the film with obvious interest and attention though we had thought of it as rather above the heads of the very young. Apparently all schoolchildren are familiar with the story of the happenings at Fatima and, once it is explained that the film they are to see is not an entertainment film or meant to amuse and that the people they will see on the screen are real and not

actors, they enter into the spirit of what is, after all, a film sermon.

In spite of the unusual element of a priest showing them to their places they accept the cinema atmosphere unconcernedly. One infant, before the film began, asked, "Do you sell ice-cream in this cinema?" A pity we had not thought of that one. We might have made some profit!

Wardour Street is accustomed to unusual sights but even the most blasé of the habitués blinked when they saw a stalwart nun, umbrella erect, holding up the already congested traffic while her crocodile of chattering charges crossed the road!

We shall show the film again after Christmas in London. We hope that parishes will perhaps arrange to have the film shown, preferably in an ordinary cinema, in their own district. This is easier from many points of view and avoids the disappointment of those who come a long way only to find the Hammer Theatre crowded out.

ADDENDUM

Treason

It has been pointed out that, to complete the inter-denominational note, it should be noticed that the screenplay of *Treason* was written by the well-known Catholic American playwright, Emmet Lavery. Thus, with Jewish and non-Catholic Christian assistance at the production ends, we have a good example of what can be done to overcome the opposition of political vested interest to the making and showing of a film which proposes to tell the truth about a matter of vital importance to all people concerned with the maintenance of personal liberty.

Lest anyone think our use of the term "non-Catholic-Christian" pedantic, may we say that "Protestant" no longer accurately describes all those Christians who do not belong to the Catholic Church.

LATEST DOCUMENTARIES

A Colour Tour of Rome and the Importance of Family Life

ROME PILGRIMAGE

This is a colour film (Kodachrome) made under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Council of the Archdiocese of Birmingham by Frs. D. Hickling, P. Corrigan and M. Corrigan with three cameras. It runs for more than an hour and gives an unpretentious, sometimes jerky but generally enjoyable account of the Birmingham Catholic Youth Pilgrimage to Rome in August 1950, including quite a bit of sightseeing and a visit to Assisi.

From an artistic and technical point of view the most memorable shots are some of the Fountain of the Tortoises and a close-up of pillars in the cloisters of St. Paul's.

But the film's outstanding achievement is to have defied the lack of light in St. Peter's and made a unique souvenir of one of the big audiences. These occasions have given something quite unprecedented to the Holy Year of 1950 and their very essence has been successfully put on record here.

There are frequent captions, so the film could be used without sound, but a tape recording is also available, consisting mostly of a commentary by Fr. S. Copsey. The absence of background music and an agreeable impression of extempore turns the picture into an informal lecture. For the audience sequence what seems to be direct sound is ingeniously used with very great effect.

The title may cause some confusion with *Rome of the Pilgrims*, but each of the two titles is in fact precisely apt for the individuality of each picture.

H. A. C. C.

"A FAMILY AFFAIR"

A Crown Film Unit Production.
Running time: 11 minutes.

All will agree with the point made by this excellent "short", viz., that the family is the normal place for a child and that no Home can be as good as a real home. If only Government Departments were as keen on upholding the importance of the family. If a child is for any reason deprived of his own family life, then the next best thing, if adoption is not feasible, is a good foster-home. Entry into a Children's Home should be the last resort. It is true, of course, that there is a "hard core" of children (the Local Authorities have about 10,000 of them) who are not suitable for fostering and for whom, therefore, Homes will always have to be provided.

A Family Affair is frankly an appeal for foster-mothers for children under the Councils, but it ought not to be forgotten that there are at least as many children looked after by the various voluntary societies. Unfortunately there are far too few Catholic foster-mothers and the danger lies in the Local Authorities placing Catholic children in their care in non-Catholic foster-homes and so there may arise a new source of leakage.

Perhaps this film with its delightful shots of attractive children in pleasant foster-homes as contrasted with rather grim-looking Homes—the date of one over the door is 1848—may start a train of thought in the minds of those who had not previously thought of having a foster-child. They might even have one for keeps.

F. J. D.

RELIGION: FILMS AND FILM STRIPS

*A Survey of material
already reviewed in
FOCUS 1948 - 1950*

By our Educational Panel

This month's article contains notices of some recent films and strips, but for the convenience of new readers and others we are grouping under suitable headings the names of all those which have been reviewed in the educational section of *Focus* during the past three years, to enable hirers and purchasers to select more readily from the available material according to their particular needs.

LIBRARIES

Catholic Truth Society, 38-40 Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

Religious Films Ltd., 6 Eaton Gate, S.W.1.

Dawn Trust Ltd., Aylesbury, Bucks.

Common Ground, Ltd., Sydney Place, S.W.7.

The Catholic Film Institute, Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, S.W.7.

Hulton Press, Educational Dept., 43-44 Shoe Lane, E.C.4.

A. FILMS AND STRIPS ON THE MASS

The Mass

Film Strip. Goatherd Productions.
Available from Dawn Trust, Ltd.
Price 10s.

This strip is one of several produced lately which portray in photographs the main actions of the Mass. The pictures show the priest as he would be seen by one who stood close by his side during the progress of the Mass, and would enable the teacher to make clear to children the significance of those actions and gestures which so often are seen—if at all—at a distance which makes it almost impossible to follow the Sacred Actions. Most of the important moments of Low Mass are shown, though many gaps would have to be bridged by a spoken commentary; each picture has a caption from the prayer of the Missal

appropriate to the action; the words are in English and occasionally the choice of key-phrase is unexpected. The strip was made "specially for Roman Catholics", but lacks something of the character and quality of a film based on a well defined pedagogical plan. The technical quality is good but not outstanding; the narrow pictures are slightly irritating as they give the impression that part of the picture has been cut off.

Suitability: 11+ and upwards.

Films on the Mass

Celebration of Mass. 2 reels silent.
C.T.S. Reviewed July 1948.

My Sacrifice and Yours. 2 reels silent.
C.T.S. Reviewed July 1948.

The Sacrifice We Offer. Colour, Sound.
Catholic Film Institute. Reviewed
March 1949.

Strips

The Sacrifice of Jesus. 2 parts. French captions. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1949.

The Sacred Actions. Catholic Film Institute. Reviewed March 1950.

Low Mass. Fr. Gillick. Heythrop College. Reviewed December 1950.

The Mass for Little Children. S.N.D. VIS. Reviewed March 1950.

B. DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS

Films

Sick Call. C.T.S. Silent. Reviewed February 1948.

Night Prayers. C.T.S. Silent. Reviewed April 1950.

Morning Offering. C.T.S. Silent. Reviewed April 1950.

Sunday. C.T.S. Silent. Reviewed April 1950.

The Gift of Faith. C.T.S. Silent. Reviewed April 1950.

Strips

Ordination of a Priest. C.T.S. Reviewed July 1948.

Nouveau Catechisme des Dioceses de France. S.E.F. Reviewed July 1948.

C. SCRIPTURE (Stories and Background)

Films

The Day's Work

2 reels (sound). Religious Films Ltd., (made by G.B.I.). R.911. Hiring price 15s. first day.

This is one of the series "Two Thousand Years Ago" designed to meet the needs of schools or of youth clubs and to help in making the Bible background less remote for twentieth century people. The name of Mary Field as director gives assurance of good quality, understanding and sympathy, without sentimentality or crudeness of presentation. The skill with which the meaning of well-known sayings of the Bible is illustrated in the small everyday happenings shown on the screen is a striking feature of these films. The carpenter is proud of the good workmanship in the ox yoke, made so that it will not gall the beasts' shoulders; the potter seeking perfection of form breaks the half-moulded vessel and reshapes it on his wheel. This film and the others of the series should be a real help to all who are concerned to build up a sympathetic knowledge and understanding of the sacred scripture in the minds of the young.

"Which Will Ye Have?"

Religious Films Ltd. 4 reels. Hiring price 30s.

In this film the theme of Barabbas, the robber released by Pilate, is used to give a faithful and reverent account of the trial and death of Our Lord. The figure of Christ is not shown on the screen, but His voice is heard replying to Caiaphas and to Pilate and speaking to Dismas, the Good Thief. The bitter, but cunningly concealed, hatred of the Sanhedrin, the fanatical outbursts of the mob, the growing fear and distress of Pilate are all convincingly portrayed. In spite of the fictional character of the story woven around Barabbas, who is made the leader and companion in chains

of the good thief, the Gospel narrative is faithfully rendered and the real meaning of the Crucifixion is never obscured. The final sequences when Barabbas in an agony of repentance creeps to the foot of the Cross and learns from Mary Magdalen who Christ is and what His death means, is not the most successful part, and introduces a note of artificiality which is absent from the remainder—but the "message" of the film spoken in the words of the converted Barabbas, is one that is worth while attempting to give: "He has died for me; now I must live for Him".

Suitability: Senior schoolchildren and youth organisations.

Naaman the Leper

Religious Films Ltd. R.F.102. Hire 12s. 2 reels.

This is not simply a biblical film, as the title might lead one to suppose, but is a sermon based on the incident of the cleansing of Naaman, and applied to the spiritual life of the modern layman. It consists of photographs of the actual preacher addressing an audience (apparently) in a cinema; and these shots alternate with rather crude line drawings illustrating the narrative portions. This is rather disconcerting, but the main purpose is not narration of a story, but its application. The film is evidently intended for members of the Church of England, or for a wider audience of "good living men". The concept of Faith here falls far short of what Catholic theology means by this virtue, and the conception of religion gives little hint of the possibilities of a life of grace built up by sacraments and centred on the sacrifice of Christ.

The Prince of Peace

C.T.S. R.799 (or G.B.I.). 3 reels. Hiring price 22s. 6d.

Based on a Nativity Play by Lois Shiver, this film shows the events of Our Lord's Birth and early life from the Annunciation to the Flight into Egypt. It is not a Catholic production, though obtainable through the C.T.S.; the Scripture words, therefore, do not correspond with the version familiar to the Catholic child, but apart from this the film can be commended for Catholic audiences as a sincere and faithful, if not a deeply moving, presentation of the Christmas story. The acting is good, and so are the music effects, which com-

bine with well designed scenery to create the appropriate atmosphere in Temple-court and Palace, on the hills or in the cave. The study of Herod is clever, but too sophisticated for young children; the veiled cruelty and evil in the face of the effeminate, almost pretty, old man would puzzle them. This is rather obviously a film version of a stage play, but perhaps in dealing with so familiar a theme this is not a disadvantage. The film would be appreciated by older schoolchildren, and is also suited to adult audiences.

Other Films

Prodigal Son. 2 reels. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1948.

No Greater Power (Zaccheus). Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1948.

Who is my Neighbour? 3 reels. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1948.

Jairus' Daughter. 3 reels. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1949.

The Unfaithful Servant. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed May 1949.

Simon Peter Fisherman. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed April 1950.

St. Paul's Years of Apprenticeship. Sound or Silent. Dawn Trust. Reviewed April 1950.

The Synagogue. 2 reels. Religious Films. Reviewed April 1950.

Where trod the Twelve. Silent. 2 reels. Religious Films. Reviewed April 1950.

Jordan Valley. British Instructional Films. 2 reels. Reviewed October 1950.

Strips

(Picture Post Film Strips. Educational Department Hulton Press.)

The Life of Christ

Part I.—The Birth and Boyhood of Jesus. 25 frames.

Part II.—Jesus the Teacher and Healer. 20 frames.

Part III.—Jesus the Saviour of the World, 22 frames.
25s. the set; 9s. each.

The Story of Jesus

Colour. 22 frames. 18s.

(i) *The Life of Christ.* The material consisting mainly of excellent modern photographs both of people and of the countryside, has been very skilfully selected. Each picture is chosen not merely to illustrate the character of the land or the people, but for its significance and relevance to some incident or saying related in the Gospels. Part I covers mainly, though not exclusively, the countryside of Nazareth and Bethlehem and the scenes which must have been familiar to the Holy Family; Part II provides a background for the Teaching and Miracles of the Galilean Ministry while Part III is concerned chiefly with Judea and the scenes of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. Each strip is provided with carefully compiled notes which call attention to interesting details and make the connections between present day scenes and happenings in the life of Our Lord. For the assistance of the teacher scripture references are given, but the writer of the notes emphasises rightly that these are only suggestive of one possible line of approach. The strips would repay careful study and preparation on the part of the teacher and would be of value to a class which was making an intelligent study of the Gospels. The doctrinal content is fairly vague, probably adapted for "agreed syllabus" teaching, but though the individual teacher will feel the need to amplify in certain directions there will be no false impression to contradict. Thus although the Divinity of Our Lord is not stressed, yet the Resurrection and the Ascension are assumed to be historical facts.

(ii) *The Story of Jesus:* A colour strip also edited with notes by Mr. Trevor Hughes is planned on lines similar to the above, though as the range is wider there is less detail. The colour photography is good and lends additional reality to Eastern scenes. This strip could be well used, like those in the other group, as a commentary on the text being read in class, or conversely, individual work on the suggested references might be done as preparation for the showing of the pictures; and this method would greatly increase the value of the lesson.

The four strips would make a useful addition to the Film strip collection of any school, but particularly in the secondary stages.

Other Films

- Old Testament History. C.T.S. (A series with French Titles.) Reviewed July 1948.
- Life Miracles and Teaching of Jesus. Bloud et Gay. (French Titles.) Reviewed July 1948.
- Gospel Stories. Dawn Trust. (Series.) Reviewed July 1948.
- Manger to Cross. Dawn Trust. Set of three. Reviewed July 1948.
- Boyhood of Jesus. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1949.
- A Certain Nobleman. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1949.
- Paul's Early Life. Dawn Trust. Reviewed March 1949.
- Story of Joseph. S.P.C.K. V.I.S. Reviewed February 1950.
- The Passover Lamb. S.P.C.K. Reviewed February 1950.
- David the Shepherd Boy. S.P.C.K. Reviewed February 1950.
- Actes des Apotres. Lumina. (French captions). Reviewed June 1950.
- Good Tidings of Great Joy. (Dominican Picture Apostolate.) Reviewed April 1950.

D. CHURCH HISTORY AND LIVES OF SAINTS

Life of St. Paul

Cathedral Film Strips. Dawn Trust. 5 parts.

Five strips of good photographs of tableaux portraying incidents in the life of St. Paul. The pictures are circular insets in a rectangular frame, which borders appropriate maps with relevant places and routes well marked. The class "Quiz" at the end of each strip is an added interest.

The strips can be used with profit with children of 11 years who are too young to read "The Acts of the Apostles" or as a summary for those who already know "The Acts".

St. Joan of Arc

C.T.S. In 2 parts.

Together with the lecture notes (abbreviated for children of 11 plus) these two strips provide an easy means of presenting, for the first time, the history of the Maid. Though the photography is not perfect, the material photographed is well chosen from works of art and historic buildings.

Films and Strips

- Life of St. John Bosco. Salesian Fathers, Battersea. Sound Film. Reviewed November 1949.
- Lives of the Saints. C.T.S. series. Reviewed July 1948.
- Bishop Challoner. C.T.S. series. Reviewed April 1950.
- Story of Bernadette. Dawn Trust. (French.) Reviewed March 1949.
- St. Bruno. Editions du Berger. Reviewed June 1950.
- St. Louis Roi de France. Editions du Berger. Reviewed June 1950.
- Histoire du Christianisme. S.E.F. Reviewed July 1948.
- Spread of Christianity. Part I. Common Ground. Reviewed June 1950.
- Albert Schweitzer. (Lives of Great Christians) Common Ground. Reviewed June 1950.

E. VARIOUS TOPICS

Fatima Today

Colour strip. Produced by Catholic Film Institute. Price 15s., with booklet.

Many thousands of Catholics of all ages will have seen the feature film "Pilgrimage to Fatima" and will be glad to have this strip consisting of "stills" depicting scenes from the film taken on location in Portugal. But the strip can be recommended on its own merits apart from its value as a memento of the film. Consisting of 33 frames, it shows us the chief places connected with the apparitions; the shrines that have arisen round the Cova da Iria, the basilica, the chapel and the hospital; the village streets; the country scenes; windmills and humble cottages, the same houses in which the children lived. Close ups are given, not of the chief human characters of the story, but of those near to them who still live nearby, the aged parents of Francisco and Jacinta, and the sister of Lucia. These and others are mingled with shots of the pilgrimages, including the arrival, the penitential exercises and the prayers of the pilgrims who come in thousands not only from every village and hamlet in Portugal but from all over the world. The notes, which presuppose some knowledge of the main facts, are interesting and help to bring out the message of Fatima which is the message of prayer and penance. *Fatima Today* succeeds in

doing what its makers have aimed at—it gives us vivid glimpses of a privileged land where Our Blessed Lady is deigning to speak to men on earth, and visibly fulfilling her rôle of co-operation with her Divine Son in drawing all things to Himself.

The Story of our Bible

Common Ground. C.G.A. 539.

Religions of the World: Islam

C.G.A. 279.

Strip Texts. 15s. each, with notes.

The quality of the reproductions in these two strips is excellent, especially in the first which has fine photographs of ancient Manuscripts and versions of the Bible. The subject is the Bible in England, but the origins are traced back to the Hebrew, and through early Christian and Medieval times. The plan and execution are of very high quality, and the notes are full and give interesting details. Due credit is given to the work of Bede and others in the section called "The Bible comes to Britain", but it is rather strange to find the famous phrase "to be ignorant of the scriptures is to be ignorant of Christ" attributed to Wycliffe. The stress is on the Bible as a great literary heritage—unique perhaps in its influence on the life and character of Englishmen; but the idea of a transcendent value or of Revelation as the Word of God is almost entirely absent; it even leaves one wondering whether the Bible's importance is as a means of promoting science and civilisation in less enlightened parts of the world.

Both this strip and the one on *Islam* would be useful if used judiciously, but in a History course, rather than in Scripture. Both need interpretation by a well-informed Catholic in order that in a few instances a false impression may not be given.

Suitability: older pupils in secondary schools.

Voice of the Deep

Fact and Faith Films, 12 Queen Anne's Gate. Sound. Colour. Terms on application.

One of a group of films produced by the Moody Institute of Science, Los Angeles, *The Voice of the Deep* claims

to be the first colour-sound film made of under-water life. These films have as their admirable purpose to bring before the public the moral and spiritual implications of modern science. In an earlier film this has been carried out in reference to the Atom bomb, and the present film offers us an interesting and informative account of experiments which led to the discovery that under-water life in the oceans is not completely silent; the erroneous assumption being due to a faulty interpretation of known facts. Using this as analogy—making a test, discovering a fact, and drawing a conclusion—we are led to consider that a similar mistake can be made in the realm of the spiritual, by ignoring important elements in the problem. Natural knowledge is sufficient for attaining truth in the natural order, but to conclude that there is no reality outside this realm is to ignore the possibility of knowledge of a different order—Faith—which enables us to know of the existence of a spiritual world.

The film has excellent points, and its technique might be adapted for Catholics working in this field. The tone is sincere, and the language, whether dealing with scientific or spiritual matters, is simple and non-technical, while good photography gives interest and variety. The concept of Faith here expressed is not the full Catholic doctrine, but neither is it a false idea; it errs by omission, and gives no hint of the necessity of Baptism for the beginnings of the life of Faith in the Christian.

Other Films

God of the Atom. Moody Institute.
Reviewed May 1948.

God of Creation. Reviewed May 1948.

Film Strips

St. Mary's Farm. Apostolic Picture Network. Reviewed April 1950.

Dawn Trust "Gem Strips". Reviewed June 1950.

SPECIAL NOTICE

With reference to the film strip *Low Mass* by John Gillick, S.J., (reviewed in December issue), all enquiries should be addressed to the Film Strip Secretary, Heythrop College, Chipping Norton, Oxon., until further notice.

Cover

Personality

Michele Morgan

Michele Morgan was born on Leap Year Day, February 29th, 1920, at Neuilly-sur-Seine, her real name being Simone Roussel.

From childhood she had determined to follow an acting career and as she grew up she saw little or no prospect of developing her talents in her home town. So, at the age of fifteen, accompanied by her young brother, she ran away to Paris, there to start her career, having completed her education at a school in Dieppe. In Paris she studied under the distinguished master of acting, Rene Simon. At the age of seventeen her charm and ability won her one of the acting "plums" of the year, that of the leading rôle in *Gribouille*, opposite that famous idol of the French public, the late Raimu.

Other successes followed fast, and she will long be remembered for the sensitive, well-balanced and intelligent performances she gave in such pre-war films as *Orage*, *Le Quai des Brumes*, *Le Recif de Corail*, *La Loi du Nord*, *Remorques* and *Untel Pere et Fils*, the last of these being the French version of *Heart of a Nation*.

By now, Michele's fame had spread far beyond the borders of her own land and the seal was set on her successes by her performance in that triumphant prize-winning production *La Symphonie Pastorale*.

It was for her acting in this brilliant picture that she was designated as the Best Actress of the Year when it was shown at the Cannes Festival of 1946.

Hollywood also brought her success in such pictures as *Joan of Paris*, *Two Tickets to London*, *Higher and Higher*, *Passage to Marseilles* and *The Chase*, but like many other sensitive and artistic people she found that Holly-



Jack Watling and Michele Morgan in
"The Naked Heart"

wood can impose restrictions in matters of policy and personal approach to rôles that can effect adversely the reactions of any artist who is essentially individualistic.

But even if Michele's professional experiences in America were not one hundred per cent satisfactory so far as her own high standards are concerned, her stay in the States certainly brought her great personal happiness. It was while she was in Hollywood that she met a tall, broad-shouldered, American actor, William Marshall, and it was not very long before the two fell in love and married. Now they are the parents of one child, are together whenever possible and are a continual refutation of the cynical adage that insists that Hollywood marriages are even shorter than they are sweet.

Today, Michele Morgan is headed for new triumphs for she is under long-term contract to London Film Studios for whom she will be making pictures both in this country and in France.

As Julie, the typist at a foreign embassy in London, in the Carol Reed production, *The Fallen Idol*, made at London Film Studios, Shepperton, she co-starred opposite Sir Ralph Richardson who played the butler with whom she was in love. In *The Naked Heart* which will soon be released, she plays the part of Maria Chapdelaine.

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A FILM REVIEW



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6^D

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National Film Reviewing Office

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3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
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FOCUS : A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

FEBRUARY 1951

No. 2

"LIFE BEGINS TOMORROW"

This film has been heralded as the most significant film for fifty years. The critics have hailed it as . . . "This ferociously exciting film . . . splendid and terrifying" . . . "The Highlight of 1950" . . . "More interesting ideas than 500 others" . . . "I went to see it and I cried at a miracle" . . . "Deserves thunderous applause" . . . "A stimulating film," and so on. When I came out from the Cameo-Polytechnic, Oxford Circus, the other evening the commissionaire was shouting: "Queueing up for all seats for all prices . . . house full . . . queueing up, ONLY." An icy wind was blowing. A long line of people several hundred yards long, was stretched on either side of the theatre.

Life Begins Tomorrow is indeed a remarkable and in some respects an exciting film with moments of real inspiration; nevertheless it is a dangerous one, because it preaches, with great power, a material philosophy of life in which science is Lord of all it surveys and in which man is a cross between a machine and a higher form of animal.

This world would be a poorer place without the aid of science; its contributions to life and happiness are staggering and the Church and all men of good will have always encouraged and blessed its work, inasmuch as it serves Truth. Science commits a serious sin, however, when it rises up and says I will not serve . . . I will

be Lord and Creator of life. I will control its beginning and its end.

"By that sin fell the angels."

It will be a sorry day for the world if science gets too big for its test tubes and assumes Divinity. People who are steady in the Christian Faith will suffer no harm from this film; indeed, we who call ourselves Christians may become better ones, when we realise what life will be like if the existentialists and the pagan psychoanalysts, biologists, artists and writers really get going.

By all means let us use science to improve our way of life, our health, our homes, our bones, if needs be our brains, but for God's sake (and I speak most reverently) let science keep its head or the heads of us all will be blown off with hydrogen bombs and science itself will be out of a job.

This film tells us in terrifying film-language what will happen to us if modern science is used for negative purposes: the real danger of modern science will come not from science itself, but from its misuse by materialists who will prostitute it.

I am an average man who believes in progress and who can be thrilled by the wonders of science, but I cannot understand why we cannot have the blessings of science and heaven too.

EDITOR.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 2: Films and Friars

By

Declan Flynn, O.F.M.

The Royal Command Performance is always a splendid affair. The King and Queen honour this film-show with their presence; distinguished film-stars travel 7,500 miles from Hollywood to join their Majesties; crowns and gowns glitter . . . diamonds flash . . . pearls sparkle . . . all the newspaper men are copy-happy . . . all the bobby-soxers are star-happy. Few people are aware that beneath the glamour and the glitter, there shines the gold of a quiet story of benevolence . . .

"Hands Across the Sea" Gesture

Some years ago, Mr. Joseph Breen, a Catholic and the Production Code Administrator in Hollywood's Johnston Office, visited Britain. While over here he got to know that the British Cineimatograph Benevolent Fund was depleted and that many who relied on it were in distress. When he returned to Hollywood he made plans to help his separated brethren, with the result that, every year, a contingent of Hollywood film-stars crosses the Atlantic to London with the single-minded purpose of assisting the King and Queen to raise funds for the only charity which assists the sick, the poor and the needy of the British Film Industry.

It is pleasing to record that this "hands-across-the-sea" gesture, which imparts Christian Charity and creates good-will between two great nations, was inaugurated by a Catholic.

Mr. Joseph Breen (everyone calls him "Joe") is the sort of man you would expect to have a generous mind; he is built on broad lines, there is a look of health and happiness about him, he laughs easily and possesses that gracious gift which makes a visitor feel perfectly at ease. When I arrived at his offices I found him poised between several telephones, engaged in a transatlantic conversation concerning *The Mudlark* and the Royal Command Performance. As soon as he was through, he stretched forth a large hand of welcome. He was really delighted to hear that the British Catholic Film Institute (about which he is well informed) had made a film, *Pilgrimage to Fatima*. "Wouldn't it be swell," he said, "if we could get the message of Our Lady of Fatima through the commercial movies . . . have you got a print with you? I'm anxious to see it." I told him I had, whereupon he pressed a button and ordered the movie-theatre to be prepared.

"Focus" in Hollywood

He spoke in warm, generous terms of the work of the Catholic Film Institute and declared himself an admirer of Focus, with the qualification that he didn't agree with everything we said . . . "Anyway," he chuckled, "you are quite a hero with the guys around this office." He pressed some more buttons, four stalwart young men entered in and for about twenty

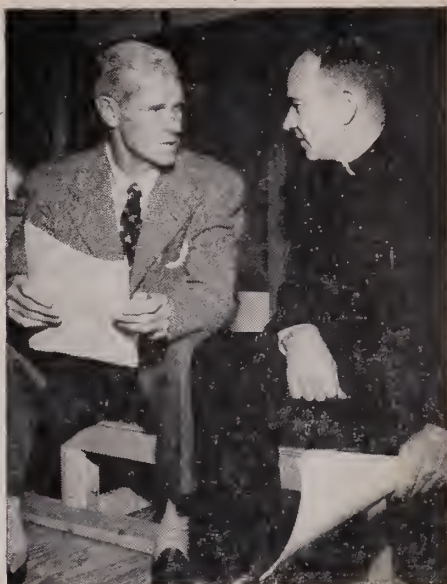
minutes we talked Focus. "What we like about your priest reviewers," one of them said, "is that you all seem to *really* like pictures; you don't nag, you see the good in them, you say what we believe."

There was a knock at the door. We were informed that the operator was ready to show *Pilgrimage to Fatima*. In a small movie-theatre where the dominating colour is red: red carpet, red plush arm-chairs, where all films are screened and censored before public release, I sat with Mr. Breen and other executives and viewed the film for the tenth time. As I watched the familiar story unwind itself I wondered what these gentlemen, so well versed in all things pertaining to films, would think of our first effort . . .

Their reactions were honest, friendly and sympathetic. Mr. Breen said he liked the film, but he didn't think that it would find any sympathy in the commercial theatre; he thought its interest would be restricted to those working in the 16mm. field. Before we parted he said: Give my congratulations to Fr. Hilary Carpenter and Mr. Andrew Buchanan.

Franciscan Beacons

Along the golden length of California, the old Franciscan Missions, with their massive white walls and picturesque Spanish towers, shine like beacons and attract visitors from all parts of the world. Some Englishmen are amused because Americans refer to these missions, founded in the eighteenth century, as "old" missions. I have no authority for saying this; but I have wondered whether the term "old" is used here affectionately rather than chronologically . . . in the sense that the Englishman speaks of Old Tom or My old pipe or My old dad. Anyway, the old Spanish Friars are remembered with affection by the American people; to them the Old Missions are hallowed spots which enshrine the saga of a great missionary enterprise, and record how the Padres taught the Indians to plant and cultivate trees, to irrigate the land, to tan leather, to make soap, to bake tiles, to love music, to love God, to appreciate God's lovely material gifts, and to live for and long for His better gifts in heaven.



Fr. Hugh Noonan, O.F.M., Director of "The Hour of St. Francis", discusses the production with Paul Kelly

Picture of Pentecost

Of all the missions, San Juan Bautista is probably the richest in relics. Fixed to a wall of the church is a box-like pulpit from which Fr. Arroyo is said to have preached to the Indian converts in thirteen different native dialects! Beside an old English music-box probably donated by the explorer, Captain George Vancouver, there is a dusty-looking dove-cote that once adorned the church ceiling and from which was released at Pentecost a white dove, which hovered over the kneeling Indians below in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles! So you see that long before the coming of the movies, the Church was teaching her lessons in pictorial language!

I was fascinated to see mass music in picturesque volumes, faultlessly written, with each voice indicated in a different colour, so that some might raise their hearts to God in red notes of love, while others might sing their sorrows in notes of blue. Again it is interesting to observe that long before the coming of the psychoanalysts who



Fr. Kenneth Henriques, O.F.M., discussing a script with Charles Laughton

(now) teach the value of colour in the healing of the mind, the Catholic Church was using the medium of colour to refresh and solace men's souls.

Religion on a Ranch

Not far from this old mission there is what I would like to call a *Modern Mission*. It is a ranch, rich in bird-song and radiant with the poetry of nature; along its leafy avenues, which look like the aisles of a Gothic cathedral, the Stations of the Cross are erected; further afield there sparkles a lake, on this lake is an island whereon, in exquisite statuary, the story of Fatima is commemorated; at the foot of a range of mountains and facing "Fatima" there is a white, wooden, ranch-house which the Franciscan Friars have converted into a Retreat House, where every week-end of the year about fifty men rest their minds and bodies and nourish their souls with prayer, meditation and the Sacraments. The Friars who conduct

the Retreats do the minimum of talking. They let Christ dwell in the tabernacle in the little chapel; the silence of the mountains; the imagery and the surrounding beauty; the drama depicted in the Stations of the Cross; the pictorial re-creation of the supernatural story of Fatima, do most of the preaching. For fifty hours these men "keep the silence" and like it. At meals a book is read. Often a religious film, such as *Monsieur Vincent*, takes the place of a conference, for a good film can stir a man's faith.

Birth of a New Idea

It was here that I first met Fr. Hugh Noonan, O.F.M., who created the weekly radio programme called "The Hour of St. Francis", which I have already spoken about. Fr. Hugh is a well built man of about fifty. He is gifted in many directions, but he wears his gifts lightly, humbly, and without fuss. He is a restful and refreshing person to meet and can impart the impression that his time is all yours. I am told that his

programme ranks among the very best on the American radio. I have heard several of them and I can understand why; for, like every true artist, Fr. Hugh can make the old sound new, he can bring the dead to life, he can impart ideas in an interesting manner.

He told me that it was while serving in the Army as a chaplain that he realised the positive possibilities of the radio. When he was demobbed he got permission to take up this form of work, and approached the radio production experts. "Not a chance," they said. "Radio is the most expensive business in the world. You have no experience, no trained personnel and, most of all, you haven't any money . . . Every radio programme must have big money—rich sponsors, wealthy organisation." When he replied that he felt sure he would get the moral and financial support of all Franciscan Tertiaries in America they shifted the accent to *No Experience*. "The Hour of St. Francis' is a swell idea but it hasn't got a chance," they said. However, Fr. Hugh went ahead. I have already mentioned that his weekly programme is heard every week on 600 stations in which the film stars of Hollywood take part. In my

picture above you see Fr. Hugh discussing his programme, with Paul Kelly, a Catholic film star.

St. Francis on Broadway

Fr. Hugh has worked so hard that he has been ordered away for several months; but the work still goes on, for he has a very intelligent and enthusiastic assistant in Fr. Kenneth Henriques O.F.M., whom you see, in another picture, discussing a script with Charles Laughton. Charles Laughton has a tender devotion to St. Francis of Assisi. In one of the programmes he gave a reading from "The Flowers of St. Francis"; on another occasion he featured in the programme, "Visit to Assisi".

I understand that he is planning to produce, on Broadway, the Little Plays of St. Francis, by Laurence Housman.

"The Hour of St. Francis," which does such big work, has a very small staff. It consists of two friars and a selfless, most capable secretary: Juanita Vaughan, who will tell you that she is doing the best job in the world.

(To be continued)

KEY TO MARRIED HAPPINESS IS BABIES, SAYS DENNIS MORGAN

Maybe you think a Hollywood film star is the last one to give hints on marital bliss? But Dennis Morgan, of Warner Bros., is certainly qualified enough: he has been married 15 years. His key to the happy married state is—babies.

"It's simple," he declares. "More kiddies, less arguments!"

Morgan has three children of his own. "The bride and I hit many a snag in our early days," he confesses. "I was working for peanuts and my bank balance was the kind that drives romance out through the window. But we were both so busy hanging out washing that we never had time for harsh words.

"A lot of good people drift apart because they lose mutual interests," Dennis points out. "That's where

babies take the No. 1 spot. Figuring out how much baby-food is going to end up in the baby and how much on you takes the place of wondering where to go to dance. And trying to mastermind juvenile schemings calls for a husband-wife briefing that would put the combined Chiefs of Staff to shame. All of this brings two people closer together, and as the children get bigger so does the couple's affection for each other.

"Trouble with a lot of marriages today is that the participants think they haven't got enough money to start bringing children into the world. As any parent knows who has weathered the storm, the time is never right, so have 'em anyway."

(From "Warnergrams".)

The Script-Writer's Role^A

By J. J. CURLE

The human situation is always the same, a mixture of bewilderment, frustration, terror and exaltation. Provided that the script-writer understands that these are the well-springs of the actions of all his characters, then, however unusual the setting of his work, however unfamiliar its technique, he will be able to help his audience.

"Help" may seem an odd word to use in this context, but it is the only final one. For though tragedy may "purge with pity and terror" and comedy "amuse", there is still behind these explanations the great "why". Why use a Shakespeare to do what life is constantly doing unaided? Why use a Sheridan to create effects that can be achieved by the sight of a man slipping on a banana skin? The answer is surely that the script-writer has compassion for the human situation. What he has to offer us is the realisation that in our central and superficial magnificences and futilities we are not alone. It is all one whether he does this by means of tragedy or comedy.

Aspects of the same thing

Tragedy and comedy are only two different aspects of the same thing. Tragedy is man's failure to compass his desire. Comedy is the spectacle of his attempt—the spectacle of the ant setting out to climb the alp. Tragedy is the more universal of the two approaches because though everyone, by the mere fact of being alive, must *feel*, not everyone knows how to observe. At the same time comedy, dealing with surfaces and appearances only, makes fewer demands on the sensibility of an audience and is therefore the more popular. Just as the great clown conjures tears through laughter, so in the greatest plays there

is frequently this mingling of the comic and the tragic.

There are those who try to deprecate tragedy in saying that it is morbid and leads to sterile inaction or who scorn comedy as evidence of our inability to share the tragedy of others. In fact the two are as essential to the human situation as night and day, and any change in that situation that eliminated one would automatically eliminate the other. If our sensibilities were suddenly to be extended to the point at which we each saw all the sorrows of the world in true perspective there could be no more comedy but equally there would be no more tragedy, for we should see that the loss of one was always the gain of another, we should see only a flux, not a series of blows and rewards. Equally, if we managed so to alter the world that every man attained his ideal and there were no more tragedy, we should have cut away together with this normal disparity between effort and achievement the very root of comedy—incongruity.

- Providing the Facts

The script-writer ought not, therefore, to take sides, but should use his gifts in whichever of these two fields suits him best or, if he can, in both. His job is to help by presenting human predicaments honestly, not so that people may learn by the answers he provides, but so that they may see the exact shape and scope of the problems with which they are confronted. The play is to the viewer's private difficulties as a chart is to a sailor. In itself it solves nothing, but it shows that others have passed that way and it provides the facts from which conclusions may be drawn and upon which action may be based.

Such conclusions will not necessarily be the same in real life as they are in a film, because the film is not only a truth but an observable shape. As the human mind cannot judge quantity and quality of experience simultaneously, and as we do not feel in ourselves what sand is while we are walking over it but only when we stop to lift some in our hands, cupping it into a globe self-sufficient and static, so an aspect of experience can only be understood in a film when it has been isolated. What is shown in a film must within its limits be true—and if it is true it will by implication suggest the wider all-embracing truth, but unlike life it must keep within those limits, avoiding all excursions and irrelevances. Life has a lifetime in which to make a total effect. It can afford to build with a mass of tiny separate details a shape that will eventually become clear. The film-wright has only two or three hours and—even if he had the time to show it—he has no knowledge of life's final shape. He therefore usually takes as an arbitrary conclusion with which to justify the course of his film retrospectively the attainment of love or death—two moments of life at which the self is transmuted to something new. What is put before us in comedy is the objective spectacle of how men face life and what we learn from tragedy is the subjective knowledge of how they face death.

Comic and Tragic

The two selves, the comic and the tragic, are part of each of us and of all our situations. There is, therefore, no reason why both should not be present in a film so long as they do not confuse its impact. Many devices have been used to prevent the two fusing in a chaos where the point of view—subjective or objective—ceases to be clear. Contrasted main and sub plots; the aside with its extension, the soliloquy; the alien observer in the guise of fool, chorus, good or bad angel or second self, moral or amoral, are all devices that have served this purpose from the age of Greek drama through Elizabethan times to our own day in which they have been "re-discovered" by Eliot and O'Neill.

The script-writer's task is not exclusively either to plait or to separate

the threads of tragedy and comedy, but to ensure that no part of whatever central truth of the human situation he builds on is omitted, obscured or contradicted by the material he uses or the way in which that material is handled. He must work to a moment of climax, to a release of laughter or tears, and this moment will only prove a release to his audience if it springs directly from what has preceded it. It is not a process in itself but only the culmination of a process. The film in fact must be like a whirling gaseous star in which each atom obeys the law of its separate truth, where each is constantly radiating energy, yet where—though everything is insubstantial—the observer sees not chaos but a well-defined shape—a shape made up of its parts not arbitrarily imposed upon them.

Question and Answer

The film must be both question and answer. That is it must, by showing truth, imply criticism and, by having a shape, isolate an experience so that the mind can grapple with it. That a film should represent the real world is unimportant. That it should represent the reality of its own situation is essential. Like a fable it discusses situations under a disguise of events and must be capable of interpretation on two levels at least. But, unlike the fable, its situation must spring from the writer's very being for, if it comes only from his brain, it will come only from the brains of his characters and—their senses being unstirred—they will never live with human warmth.

Pilgrimage to Fatima

The Book of the Film may
be had from

THE BLUE COTTAGE,
SUMNER PLACE MEWS,

S.W.7. Price 2s. 6d.

Synthetic Characters—

Critic's Chief Peeve*

By William H. Mooring

A lady writes that she never permits a movie critic to influence her choice of entertainment "because the individual critic sees so many movies he becomes blasé".

She thinks he then overlooks much good to be found in any film he reviews.

She invites me, as a test, to set down some of my personal peeves and preferences. "Then" she says, "I shall know whether too frequent exposure to movies has clouded your critical judgment."

I do not know whether or not I am blasé. I do know I am frequently bored. I see an average of 6 films a week. Although I often nod or yawn I have never knowingly been caught snoring.

This does not mean I have no peeves. I have many.

Enough of Western Types

I am, for instance, thoroughly weary of seeing one after another of Hollywood's leading male stars play "cowboys and Indians". I wish they'd start a Hollywood cycle of Eastern, Northern or Southern films. Anything but Westerns. By now I can scarcely look a Technicolor mountain or a steer steak squarely in the face.

I wish the "top stars" for one lovely experimental year, would swap among themselves, the "typical" rôles in which each repeats his or her own stereotyped routines. Better still, get the Hollywood writers to scrap the whole lot and give us a new set of movie characters drawn from life rather than memory of bygone box office hits.

* Reprinted from "The Tidings", Los Angeles, Cal.

I wish, when making a film like *The White Tower*, which is Paul Jarrico's adaptation of the James Ramsey Ullman novel, the movie people would stick to the subject which in this case is mountain climbing.

Especially when they have the magnificent French Alps to shoot at, I wish they'd cut out silly, romantic clinches on ice-covered ledges. I know they may have Alida Valli and Glenn Ford in the cast, but need these lovely young people take time out from their climbing to keep falling into each other's arms?

I wish sometimes we might meet on the screen a young American who is outwitted by foreign competition. We know well enough that American youth is on its toes. Does Hollywood have to go on suggesting it is always on somebody else's as well?

In a motion picture like *The Big Lift* which shows the American Air Force in Berlin, it would not have hurt to have the R.A.F. around too. They were there, you know.

In any movie whatsoever I maintain that a woman's face would be welcome before Factor.

I wish I might see strong, feminine eyebrows growing untransplanted, their owner's unashamed. A few pairs of feminine lips with no apparent relationship to New England sausages wouldn't be bad either.

Ghosts of Children

My preferences call out for just one good film about so-called "planned parenthood". Perhaps introducing a couple going on in years who, after a young lifetime of "wise" planning, now face an old age with the ghosts of the

children God once held waiting for them.

Even if they had one or two children they think about "all the others". What would they have been like? What talents would they have shown? What problems and blessings brought home?

I would like to see Hollywood skip that other *Third Man* they are looking for among Graham Greene's mysteries and set about filming "The Heart of the Matter" instead. His Mr. Scobie was not the first, second or third man to die by his own hand with sorrow in his heart and contrition on his lips. Even in a story which gave evil so many points over good, the drama, if well integrated and morally sound, would echo the truth that right is right and wrong is wrong. I prefer not to be nudged into realisation of the fact in every last movie reel.

I would like to hear via the screen, from the great author who said that you cannot have sinless drama about sinful man. Where, by the way, is Gilbert K. Chesterton in the stream of movie inspiration?

I tire of seeing stories such as Leo Brady's "The Edge of Doom" get pushed clear over into literary oblivion by writers who do not understand what

they are about. I wish Sam Goldwyn could buy Philip Yordan's "Anna Lucasta" and give it to Brady to adapt by way of reprisal. That might indeed return good for evil.

Synthetic Stuff

Most of all I tire of films in which synthetic Hollywood characters go through the mechanical game of tangling up their own emotions in order that someone else may come along on a pretext of untangling them, get everything inextricably messed up so that an unhappy climax must in desperation be fobbed off as the "happy ending".

Whenever I assume that a screenplay involves human types I naturally look for mistakes and failures. It is not human mistakes and failures which dull my long hours in the movie theatre.

It is the fact that while making them, human characters are seldom seen attempting anything that matters.

Too many of them are shown wasting their time, instead of living. They waste a lot of mine, too. Especially if there are many people like the lady who suspects all critics of being blasé.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS FUND

IF one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days The Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Kindly send donation to:

Rev. J. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19

CATHOLIC PREMIERES

PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA

After disappointments and difficulties, the Premiere of *Pilgrimage to Fatima* was arranged for Sunday, October 22nd, at the Palace Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London.

The occasion was graced by the presence of the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Godfrey, who presided, and His Excellency the Portuguese Ambassador accompanied by Madame Ulrich. By a fortunate accident, the date of the Premiere was late enough to allow us to have Father Hilary Carpenter with us, just returned from America. Father Carpenter spoke about the place of the truly religious film in the world of cinema. The Apostolic Delegate then introduced the film and spoke of the meaning of Fatima as the latest of the three famous apparitions of Our Lady in modern times, each with its message of warning and demand for a more Christian way of life.

SORCIER DU CIEL

The London Premiere of the French film, *Sorcier du Ciel*, took place at the New Gallery Cinema, Regent Street, London, on October 5th. It was played for the benefit of the Young Christian Workers through the courtesy of Films de France and the J. Arthur Rank Organisation.

His Eminence Cardinal Griffin, the Patron of the Premiere, was unable to be present. His Lordship, Bishop Myers, deputised for His Eminence and received the distinguished audience which included members of the Diplomatic Corps as well as Bishop Cowderoy, of Southwark, and Bishop Parker, of Northampton.

Georges Rollin, the French actor who plays the rôle of St. John Baptist Vianney, came specially from Paris to be present for the Premiere. Richard Todd, Nadia Grey and Jeanette Scott were among the audience who were presented to His Lordship in the foyer. Dr. Wand, Bishop of London, also

honoured the Premiere with his presence and sat next to Bishop Myers during the performance.

The Marchioness of Lothian was Chairman of the Premiere Committee, John Davies, Esq., Vice-Chairman and Secretary, Miss K. O'Donnell, M.B.E.

THE MASTER CALLETH THEE

The film-pageant devised by the Filiae Matris Bonae Concillii and produced by Andrew Buchanan is shortly to have its Premiere. With a Commentary written by the F.M.B.C. and spoken by Robert Speaight it is an interesting attempt to use film to stimulate vocations to the Religious Life.

The F.M.B.C. are a group of women whose work is to guide young girls and women into the form of religious life to which they may be most suited. At the house in Claverton Street, near Westminster Cathedral, weekly Retreats and Conferences are held at which girls are able to pray about and discuss the matter of a religious vocation. The film, *The Master Calleth Thee* shows a young girl in her journey to find her true calling, with the lure of the world on the one hand and the dedicated service of God in religion on the other. She passes in review all the well-known Religious Orders and Congregations, most of which have a part in the film by proxy. Girls from Convent Schools and girls in business gave up their time and (in the case of the business girls) their holiday in order to take part in this film apostolate. They appear in the habits of more than forty different religious congregations. For their parts they were coached by nuns from the various convents.

The film will be distributed and shown by the Filiae Matris Bonae Concillii from whom all information about the film may be obtained. Address: F.M.B.C., 27 Claverton Street, London, S.W.1.

The International Film Review

Revue Internationale du Cinema.

Organ of International Catholic Film Office. Number 7. American Number. Contributions by Irene Dunne, Eric Johnson, Martin Quigley, Darryl Zanuck, W. H. Mooring and others. English editions of Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and the Holy Year Double Number 5-6 still available. Subscription rate: £1 per annum. Obtainable from: Revue Internationale du Cinema.

It is much regretted that in spite of all the efforts made by the officers of the Catholic Film Institute in England and good friends in Australia, Malta and other places the minimum number of subscriptions necessary to support an English edition of the "International Film Review" have not been forthcoming.

An enterprise such as was involved in publishing the three editions of the "International Film Review" in English, Spanish and French, represented a large act of Faith based on the conviction that a periodical of a serious character was necessary to help to realise the mandate of Pius XI in the Encyclical *Vigilanti Cura*, "Promote good motion pictures". From the purely business point of view it was probably an unusual undertaking; nevertheless two or three persons had confidence enough in the goodness of the cause and the enthusiasm of the Catholic body to sink a considerable amount of capital in the enterprise. This confidence has, at least as far as the English-speaking countries are concerned, proved to be misplaced. Notwithstanding the excellent reception given the Review by leading personalities of the world of Cinema and by this specialised press, we have to announce that the English edition of the Review must now cease, at least temporarily.

We have, however, to consider the interests of those who have given us

their support and helped to spread the doctrine of Christian Cinematography taught in the pages of the "International Film Review". We think that the majority of those who have honoured us with subscriptions for the English edition will gladly accept to continue with the French Edition which will be available from the same distributors as heretofore. Those whose subscriptions have been taken out since the Review began may care to complete their subscriptions by taking back numbers of the English edition of the Review. Those who do not wish to have a foreign language edition may have their outstanding subscriptions refunded on application. We hope, however, that at least some of these latter may be willing to regard their subscriptions as a donation to the work of Catholic Film Action.

It will be understood, we are confident, that this work of Catholic Action, like so many others, is based largely on voluntary efforts. It is, therefore, true that the ordinary means of publicity have not been available. It may well be that as time goes on the number of subscriptions from English-speaking countries will indicate that there is a large enough group of readers to warrant a new effort being made to bring back the English edition. This we promise to do as soon as the support available makes it an economical proposition. In the meantime, we express our gratitude as well as our disappointment to those who have so loyally supported our efforts, and we offer our sincere congratulations to the Catholics of Western Germany who have, as a token of their interests in the problems presented by the Cinema, undertaken, on their own responsibility to produce a German edition of what the Holy Father termed an "indispensable" organ of expression for those who realise the potentialities of the cinema in the world today.

JOHN A. V. BURKE,

Editorial Board of the Revue
Internationale du Cinéma on
behalf of the Office Catholique
Internationale du Cinéma.

FOCUS FILM COURSE. Part Two. No. 1

Introducing the Film-Makers

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Having completed our study of the nature of the film industry, how it operates, and its influence on mankind, we are justified in turning attention to actual production, and so I am going to introduce you to the specialists whose work, collectively, composes a film. First, we will meet them all together and then, month by month, study the work of each separately at close quarters.

But before they appear on the scene I want to finally dispel what still seems to be a widespread illusion—that films can be made by anyone, almost anyhow. You would be astonished at the number of unqualified people, both inside and outside the industry, who plunge into production, full of the kind of confidence which only inexperience can create. Result: financial and technical collapse, and film falls into disrepute. If this Course did nothing but prevent a continuation of this practice it would be doing a great service to all, and particularly to those seeking to employ film increasingly for religious purposes. Think of the years of study and practice needed to master music, painting, writing. And so it is with film-making which demands an overall knowledge of every technical and artistic branch involved before one can specialise in a particular department. If you are not a builder, would you try to build a house? You would not know how to draw up the plans, you would probably overlook the foundations, and the walls would refuse to meet the ceilings. Similarly, if you start to build up a film without a plan, it will surely fail.

Who then is the planner of films? The *Producer*, who selects or visualises subjects for development. Who is the architect who draws the plans? The *Scenarist* whose first sketch is known as a Treatment which describes everything that will be seen and heard in the proposed film. The scenario will be evolved from the Treatment.

Who actually lays the foundations and builds the film upon them, brick by brick, scene by scene? The *Director*. And who are the key specialists working by his side? The *Art Director*, equivalent of the interior decorator, of course; the *Cameraman*, or *Lighting Expert*, who captures everything visible, and the *Sound Recorder*, who captures everything audible. Who is the person who merges all these results into a unity? The *Editor*, who assembles hundreds of scenes and sounds into a continuous story in accordance with the plan written by the Scenarist.

We shall therefore meet the Producer, Scenarist, Director, Art Director, Cameraman, Sound Recorder and Editor, in that order. Later, we shall visit the Players, the Make-Up Department, the Property Shop, the Musicians and also some Documentary Units which do not require studio facilities.

Sufficient now to emphasise once again to the student that every film, long or short, must be produced to a plan, on solid foundations, by experienced people, for there is no short cut to successful film-making, as we shall learn.

FOCUS FILM COURSE PRIMER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Handbooks comprising introductory articles on all the lectures comprising the first series of the Focus Film Course are now available, price 1s. 6d. nett. Obtainable from More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7, or from Blue Cottage, Summer Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*



Mario Lanza . . . Kathryn Grayson . . . Carrol Naish

THE TOAST OF NEW ORLEANS

Starring: Kathryn Grayson, Mario Lanza and David Niven with J. Carrol Naish and Clinton Sundberg. **Director:** Norman Taurog. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

There is something relaxing about the honest-to-goodness musical film. So long as the singing is good of its kind, the acting not too outrageous, the decor pleasing and the direction firm and competent, one does not ask too much of the story for probability.

The Toast of New Orleans is such a film. Kathryn Grayson and Mario Lanza both have pleasant voices in the operatic tradition and are able to sing the less important ditties with an attention which lends them unaccustomed dignity. Both singers are, I fear, in the manner which is usual nowadays with voices of every quality, over-amplified. Mario Lanza's

tenor has something of Gigli's ringing tone without that great man's regrettable tendency to sob at every opportunity.

The story tells of a Louisiana fisherman who has acquired a perfectly trained voice by singing native chansons and who is discovered by an operatic impressario (quietly played by David Niven). The idea is that he should be paired off with the impressario's other protégé, Kathryn Grayson, and sent on a tour of the world-famous opera houses. Unfortunately, Mario's well-trained voice is not matched by his social graces. The stresses and strains involved in putting this little matter right occupies the rest of the film with the usual gaucheries at table and in restaurants, at which Mario's uncle (J. Carrol Naish) loudly assists, to the evident amusement of the audience.

A film which you can sit back to enjoy with an easy conscience.

V. .

Starring: Hedy Lamarr, Victor Mature and George Sanders, with Angela Lansbury and Henry Wilcoxon. A Paramount Picture. **Producer and Director:** Cecil B. DeMille. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 128 minutes.

SAMSON

What is one to make of a film with a title like this, produced by C. B. DeMille and having Hedy Lamarr and Victor Mature in the chief rôles? These very facts at once rob it of all hope of being taken seriously. Yet the subject and the much-publicised source of the story demand critical attention.

The Holy Bible has much to answer for (if I may say so without irreverence) but it ought not to be held responsible for the circus built around the Nazarene whose strength was his weakness by the gentleman who produces only masterpieces. True, Holy Writ is here pieced out with the literary assistance of Messrs. Jesse L.

Lasky, Jr., Frederick M. Frank, Harold Lamb and Vladimir Jabotinsky. The result is a script in which Delilah becomes the younger sister of Samson's Philistine wife and finally repents of her treachery, to die with Samson in the collapse of the Temple of Dagon. Other curiosities are the family of Samson which seems to include a boy named Saul who has an engaging habit of slapping Samson on the back and only just refraining from saying: "Ah, gee! Samson!" Samson, incidentally, prophesies that the lad will be the first king of Israel. This bungles up Biblical chronology somewhat to say nothing of adding a new name to the list of Prophets.

Still it must be admitted that we are given full value for our money in the spectacular episodes of Samson's career. Unfortunately, the slaying of a thousand with the jaw-bone of an ass



Delilah is received by the Saran . . .

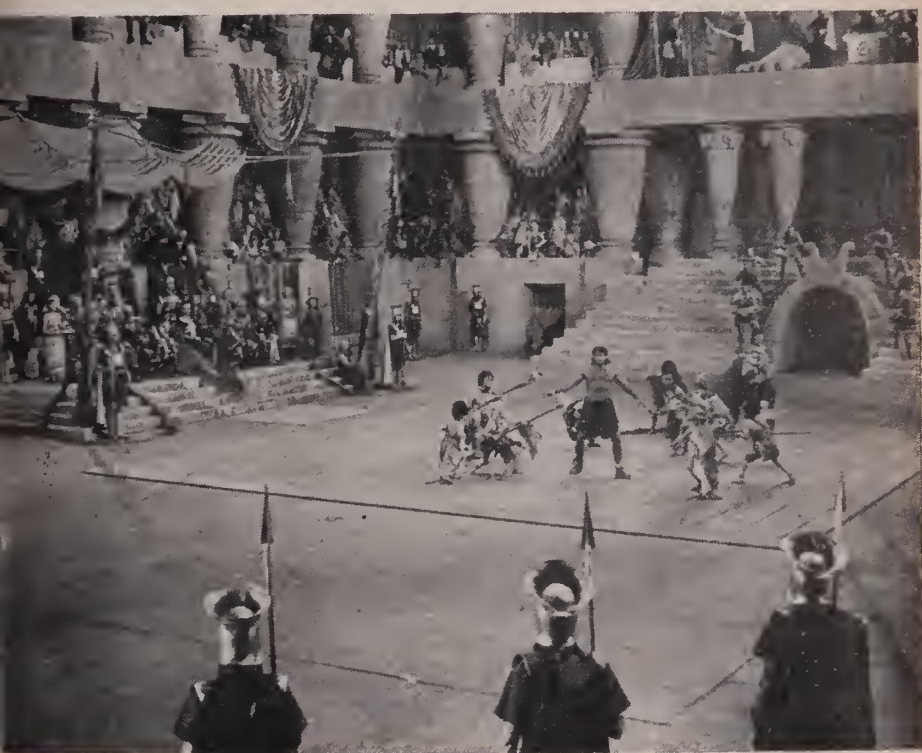
DELILAH

has been imitated before by gentlemen like Errol Flynn, Douglas Fairbanks or Richard Greene who used fists, swords or non-stop repeating pistols. The collapse of the Temple is a new one even for Errol Flynn, for all his experience in Burma, and its slow-motion crumbling does not waste a moment of shrieking, body-squirming, limb-crushing thrill. Nice stuff for the "U" audiences, this.

We are not allowed to see Samson carrying off the gates of Gaza. Not, I imagine, that the effects man would have had any special difficulty, but it might have been awkward to explain the reason for Samson's visit to the place. Nor does he kill the thirty Philistines whose new clothes he needs to pay his bets; he leaves them feeling rather chilly. Again, the uncomfortable business of the burning foxes is avoided by letting Samson have a

rehearsal for the Temple destroying scene by throwing burning pillars around in his father-in-law's house when, justifiably annoyed that his wife has been lent to somebody else, he lays about him. The Bible tells us that Mrs. Samson was burned by the Philistines, but here she is impaled with a spear: so much quicker, and it looks nicer.

No one objects to the old-fashioned spectacular thriller, but it is rather nauseating to have this ponderous parading of the Bible in Gothic lettering, as if a religious epic were being offered to an intelligent public instead of which we are given Hedy Lamarr as a scantily-dressed bobby-soxer cheering on her favourite lion-killer; Victor Mature as a Danite Tarzan whose hair grows in accordance with the supposed requirements of his film fans, leaving his chin and chest innocent of adornment; George Sanders, wearing a neat line in up-to-the-minute Philistine uniform with an accent recently heard, out of Oscar



... Samson being tormented in the temple of Dagon

Wilde, via Oxford, in *Alt About Eve*. Really, gentlemen, it is asking too much. Doubtless the crowds will swallow it, but so long as they do not call it a "religious" film, I shall survive the temptation to be sick.

V.

INTO THE BLUE

Starring: Michael Wilding, Odile Versois, Constance Cummings, Jack Hulbert, with Edward Rigby.
Producer: Michael Wilding.
Director: Herbert Wilcox.
Distributors: British Lion. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 83 minutes.

The blue is the sea and nobody actually goes into it. But on it in a yacht goes everybody named above except Herbert Wilcox, who is definitely there in spirit. The original destination was Oslo, but the course had to be changed to Havre-Ronen-Paris-Monte Carlo.

Odile Versois is an intermittently attractive newcomer, Jack Hulbert is an "oldcomer" welcomed back to the screen, and Constance Cummings is always exactly right in this film, which might provide adequate entertainment for an unexacting mood.

Q.

THE SECRET FURY

Starring: Claudette Colbert and Robert Ryan with Jane Cowl and Paul Kelly. An R.-K.-O. Radio Picture. **Director:** Mel Ferrer. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 85 minutes.

This is a disappointing film, filled with improbabilities, yet with sufficient power in it to keep one, more or less, unwillingly glued to one's seat till the unsatisfactory conclusion.

It disappoints because, starting off with a very promising comedy situation, that of the groom who has difficulty in gaining access to his own wedding reception, it moves on to drama when a guest holds up the ceremony with the revelation that the bride is not free to marry and then fizzles out after a set of the most unlikely circumstances are supposed to account for the bride's inability to remember a previous wedding. In

route she is tried for murder, then confined in a lunatic asylum, from which she conveniently and quite impossibly breaks out, armed with a pistol to bring this complicated business to an end.

Not Real Life

Still, it has Claudette Colbert, and maybe it was intended to let her admirers see her run the whole gamut of dramatic expression, which she does, from the initial light-comedy opening, through dawning incredulity, fear, uncertainty, terror, neurosis, mental instability, lunacy, reawakening sanity, and sudden cure, to the screaming exhibition when she finds herself in the attic with the other lunatic who is trying to force her to kill him!

Robert Ryan is nice and Paul Kelly is not: which is the way they are supposed to be. Even so, I find it difficult to believe that they would be either so nice or so nasty in real life. But then, of course, this is far from being real life. Which is why you, dear cinema-goer, I suppose, will pay to see it.

V.

HA'PENNY BREEZE

Starring: Gwyneth Vaughan, Don Sharp, Edwin Richfield. **Director:** Frank Worth. **Distributors:** A.-B. Pathé. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 72 minutes.

It is, I conceive, part of the duty of the critic to praise courageous effort as well as to indicate merit or the contrary. In days when meretricious ostentation gets away with so much, merely because it emanates from Hollywood or Pinewood, and has the right name on the production lists, it is both a pleasure and a responsibility to applaud incentive and independence even though there are faults to mar first efforts.

Ha'penny Breeze is a simple tale of two young men who come back from the war to find their old fishing village crumbling and the trade gone elsewhere. The village folk have other jobs in the factories and the like. Eventually the villagers are induced to lend a hand to convert an old smack

into a yacht so that it may compete in a local race. After various difficulties are overcome, the yacht is finished and though it does not win the race, the enterprise shown by the young people brings them an order for the designing and building of a new boat and the film ends with the prospect of the village returning to life.

Remarkable First Effort

The film itself provides a story for a film. It was made by three young men, Frank Worth, Don Sharp and Darcy Conyers, who were determined that films could be made, as in Italy, by seeking natural subjects for stories to be filmed in their natural surroundings and, most important of all, that they could be made at a

fraction of the cost usually associated with studio productions. Starting with practically nothing in their pockets, their enthusiasm and persistence, in addition to certain native qualities of skill and artistry, enabled them to produce, not a prize-winning film, but a remarkably pleasant first effort. It is rather loosely constructed and somewhat too ingenuous but it has authenticity and the characters it has collected among the villagers show promise of a more disciplined discrimination in future efforts. The photography is delightful and the acting none the less pleasant for being in the documentary style. Here is a film to ask for when you are tired of streamlined screen sophistication.

V.



Independent team on location.

THE UNDEFEATED

Starring: Gerald Pearson. **Commentator:** Leo Genn. **Director:** Frank Dickson. **Distributors:** A.-B. Pathé. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 35 minutes.

This semi-documentary tells the story of the men whose war disablement problems have to be solved not only in the departments of the Ministry of Pensions but also in the minds of the men themselves. Their social readjustments are as difficult to bring about as the more prosaic physical readjustments of limbs and bodies.

Played by Pensioners

The characters in the film are played mainly by the pensioners themselves



The Undeclared

and with a fine sense of dramatic understatement. The chief rôle is given to Gerald Pearson, a parachute officer who lost both legs and won the Military Cross at Monte Cassino. His performance is deeply moving and most effective. His screen "voice" is provided by Leo Genn.

Such a subject compels comparison with the Hollywood film on the same subject, *The Men*. The American film was a very good film, but there is no doubt in my mind that the more modest British effort is very much more effective. Its air of detachment and the careful avoidance of emotional overplaying, a fault into which *The Men* fell notably, lifts it to a higher plane altogether.

V.

BRANDED

Starring: Alan Ladd, Mona Freeman, Charles Bickford, with Robert Keith, Joseph Calleia, Peter Hanson, Seena Boyle, Tom Tully. **Technicolor.** Paramount. **Producer:** Mel Epstein. **Director:** Rudolph Maté. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 94 minutes.

Beautiful scenery is the main feature of *Branded*. The story is another modification of the theme of bad man making good. Once we allow for improbabilities we find our interest engaged up to the hilt. Alan Ladd does well as the handsome and sullen impostor who puts everything right before he marries the girl. X.

SO YOUNG, SO BAD

Starring: Paul Henreid with Catherine McLeod, Grace Coppin, Cecil Clovelly and Anne Francis. A United Artists Picture. **Director:** Bernard Vorhaus. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

What do producers hope to accomplish by films which deal with prisons, reformatories, orphanages, mental homes and the like? In the present case there is more evidence of sordid curiosity than of reforming zeal. We are treated to the efforts of a soft-hearted and somewhat unprofessional psychiatrist who is certain that he can iron out the misunderstandings and complexes which, he says, really bring girls to reformatories.

His methods are not very profound. Having prescribed occupational therapy (which is mumbo-jumbo for light work) he does not bother to find out that a sadistic matron interprets it as fourteen hours potato-gathering and twelve-hour periods in a subterranean laundry. The results are revolutionary in the wrong sense and the remedies applied by the matron include fire-hosing and solitary confinement. A suicide and a break-out are two of the climaxes. The psychiatrist is allowed to take charge of the reformatory only after the time-serving Warden and the sadistic Matron have nearly won over the Trustees during the course of a curious enquiry in which the accused conducts the investigation.

The acting of three unknown girls, Anne Francis, Rosita Moreno and Anne Jackson, is worthy of a better cause. Paul Henreid is completely convincing as the kind of psychiatrist who would be put in charge of a film reformatory. Grace Coppin, likewise, could only be found in film-land. Real-life sadists are much more subtle.

Unconvincing

For the rest, there is a weak mixture of sentiment and cruelty without anything strong enough to make us believe either in the facts of the story or their psychological cure.

V.

WALK SOFTLY STRANGER

Starring: Joseph Cotten, Valli, Spring Byington, Paul Stewart. **Producer:** Robert Sparks. **Director:** Robert Stevenson. **A Dore Schary Presentation. Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

Some films make you rise in your seat, others make you sink back more deeply. This film belongs to the latter category.

Can a wastrel renounce his ways to become a useful and honourable man? Indeed so. Can a social butterfly, cut off from her gaiety by cruel accident, turn from embitterment to become a simple and loving maiden? Indeed so. Does this film indicate the struggle these reformations imply? Indeed no, and again no, no, no. Dramatically, therefore, negligible. Another Hollywood omelette made without eggs. Smoothly synthetic, no doubt, but without nourishment.

Valli, as the crippled heroine, beyond flashing her eyes and sitting pretty, has no chance to show her ability as an actress. The rest of the cast act commendably well. Direction and camera work unobtrusively good. Script medium. One passage I remember because of its theological flavour. A shady character says to Cotten, "Shall I be seeing you again?" He replies, "If, as some people say, there is an after life, I'll meet you down there." There is humour in that, I know, but also a revealing glimpse of the superficial mind of the film-maker.

T.

FILM SHOW

**The Catholic Film Institute
Productions**

**Rome of the Pilgrims
Crucifers to Walsingham**

and

Pilgrimage to Fatima

will be shown at

**Westminster Cathedral Hall
Ambrosden Avenue, S.W.1**

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FILM STRIP

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Coloured pictures from the film

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**THE CATHOLIC FILM
INSTITUTE**

**Blue Cottage, Sumner Place
Mews, London, S.W.7**

I SHALL RETURN

Starring: Tyrone Power, Micheline Puelle, with Tom Ewell. **Producer:** Lamar Trotti. **Director:** Fritz Lang. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. In technicolor. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 104 minutes.

It was General MacArthur who returned to the Philippines, just as it said on the cigarette packets. And the Resistance Movement brought out the coca-cola which it had saved to celebrate victory.

But before that we are shown "the greatest personal story to come out of the Pacific". Chuck Palmer (Tyrone Power) and seven others belonging to U.S.A. Motor Torpedo Squadron 3, come out of the Pacific and have quite a time in the guerilla war on Leyte. Nothing comes amiss to Chuck. He can set up a radio transmitting station and perform an abdominal operation, all without previous experience. After the husband of Jeanne (Micheline Puelle, a sort of French Bebe Daniels) has been bumped off by the Japs, her friendship with Chuck "warms into love". It looked as if the chill had been off from the start.

Some films are classified for adults only. This should be for adolescents only. They would enjoy its series of wartime adventures, but there is little to interest the adult mind.

Q.

WHERE DANGER LIVES

Starring: Robert Mitchum, Faith Domergue, Claude Rains. **Producer:** Irving Cummings, Junior. **Director:** John Farrow. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A.

When a doctor falls in love with one of his patients who is mad and who already has a husband, he is asking for trouble. In this picture Robert Mitchum is the doctor and Faith Domergue is the mad woman; they meet trouble (as they say in America) "plenty".

The direction is the chief virtue of

this film; it is so well directed that it becomes a sort of psychological thriller. While in progress one hardly sees the faults for the thrills. It is when one sits back and thinks, that one realises how faint is the story; a fellow like Mitchum, who goes around in a semi-alive fashion and has a melancholy voice and a melancholy, surly manner might find his way into a hospital as a psycho-pathic patient, but not as a doctor. Faith Domergue acts her ugly part of lies, cunning, deceit, murder, selfishness and the rest loudly and realistically. In the short time in which Claude Rains, Domergue's husband, is allowed to live he performs with distinction.

There is always some sort of moral in John Farrow's films. I imagine the moral wrapped up in this morbid, well-directed story is that crime doesn't pay or that the truth will out.

E

BORN TO BE BAD

Starring: Joan Fontaine, Robert Ryan, with Zachary Scott, Joan Leslie and Mel Ferrer. **Producer:** Robert Sparks. **Director:** Nicholas Ray. *Certificate:* A. *Running time:* 94 minutes.

Christabel (Joan Fontaine) appears on the scene as the timid country cousin, arrived in the big city to take over Donna's (Joan Leslie) job as secretary to her rich uncle. The retiring secretary is about to marry wealthy Curtis (Zachary Scott), but Christabel, in her sanctimonious way, starts poisoning the mind of Curtis against Donna. In fact, this blushing rose is deadly, and Gobby (Mel Ferrer), an artist friend of Curtis, describes her as being "as helpless as a wildcat". The same Gobby sums up Christabel neatly as "Lucretia Borgia and Peg O' My Heart".

Christabel, however, while trying to hook the goldfish, Curtis, does really fall in love with a budding author, Robert Ryan. She marries the money-bag, while trying to keep her lover dangling on the line. The lover, alas, proves uncooperative and refuses the

life of adultery. To escape the company of her husband as much as possible, she becomes an enthusiastic socialite, but the strain of acting as the devoted wife is too much and Curtis eventually discovers where her heart lies.

Jibe at Morals

The plot of this film is well-worn, but the acting is competent and the script is fresh. The débonaire Mel Ferrer just about steals the show.

The wickedness of Christabel is laid bare, but she manifests no sense of guilt or repentance. The final shots, her eviction from the home of Curtis, reveal her as the perfect cynic. She will take nothing to remind her of dear Curtis—well, nothing except a car-full of furs and jewellery. Another significant jibe at modern morals is given in the final scene, when Gobby puts a higher price ticket on Christabel's portrait—as the divorced wife of a social personality her stock has gone up in the city.

To the viewer the bad woman is a bit too obviously bad, and although the message is got over that marriage for money does not mix with an illicit liaison, still one is left with the impression that to have tried and failed can be quite profitable.

N.

THE BIG STORE

Starring: The Marx Brothers.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

Running time: 65 minutes.

Either you like the Marx Brothers or you do not. The recent spate of reissues has included many of the vintage Marx. *The Big Store*, made in 1941, is one of the more amusing in the true Marx style. There are longer periods of real fun in this film than in any since *A Night at the Opera*. The title sufficiently suggests the story. There is a charming interlude with Harpo playing some Mozart and Schubert, arrayed in eighteenth century costume, in which with the assistance of a series of mirrors he plays duets and trios with himself. He is always my favourite and there is a large dose of him in this film. Still, it is a pity

that these talented brothers are not allowed to be funnier in shorter films. Comics cannot sustain nor the audience endure the honour necessary for a feature-length film.

V.

TIME TO LOSE

Starring: Malt Butter, Twixy Cleger,

Selina Floof. **Produtor:** Abe

Czwyxhorse. **Director:** Ed.

Custard Brown. **Distributors:**

Vampire Films: **Certificate:** A.

Category: B. **Running time:**

90 minutes.

I have for many years now, in an eventful and I humbly trust not unuseful (though assuredly not gainful) life, on train journeys, on bottoms of buses and on backs of envelopes—you know the usual patter—been composing a film script. It's good, it's gigantic, it's box office.

It runs like this. Moving camera slowly descends from great height. It hesitates drunkenly over a silent city in which all sleep but prowling G-men and hungry cats. It comes to rest on an apartment—taken from top-side, side-side and upside down—in which two lovers embrace in agonising love. "I love you," "I love you too," "Then stop biting my ear," and so on. Camera lingers over set of chessmen—classy touch.

The script then goes on to tell of a misunderstanding over a misunderstanding. Alas, the finest china is but clay. The hero becomes involved in the spidery intrigue of a beautiful woman dressed in sequins night and day. She is a spy. The hero lies his way out manfully and informs the G-men. They send out a special agent, guess who?—the heroine. The beautiful spy escapes, swimming strongly in a shark infested sea. Reconciliation of lovers, lapping waters, moonlight, soft music, "I love you," fade out.

But my labour has been vain. After seeing *Time to Lose* I realise that my script can never be produced. It would be plagiarism.

But on reconsideration, would this bother the film world?

T.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

VOLPONE

Starring: Henry Bauer, Louis Jouvet, Fernand Ledoux and Jacqueline Delubac. **Director:** Maurice Tourneur. **Distributors:** G. C. T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

Ben Jonson is reputed to be the greatest of English dramatists except Shakespeare. This French adaptation by Jules Romains and Stefan Zweig of his well-known play is probably the first and only example of his work which the majority of English cinema and theatre audiences will have the opportunity of judging.

Despite the fact that the screen-wrights have added a prologue and changed the denouement, the piece remains stagey and is chiefly interesting as an example of how a theatrical museum exhibit can be transferred to the screen so that its peculiar flavour is kept intact. The decor by Jean Perrier and Andre Barscq is in keeping with this foible and the photography, mainly in soft focus, has that curious quality of lithography customary to pre-war French films, which, in this instance, lends special charm to the medieval costumes and sets and the occasional exteriors of Venice.

The acting of Henri Bauer and Louis Jouvet is likewise deliberately stylised and its theatricality strengthens the impression that one is regarding an antiquity brought to the screen for the purpose.

The film was made in 1939 and is a variation on the theme used by Shakespeare in *Timon of Athens*, of the corrupting influence of avarice, leading its votaries to utter degradation.

The story is sufficiently summarised by Ben Jonson himself in the acrostic which he introduces his play:

"Volpone, childless, rich, feigns sick, despairs,

Offers his state to hopes of several heirs,

Lies languishing: his parasite receives

Presents of all, assures, deludes; then weaves

Other cross plots, which ope themselves, are told.

New tricks for safety are sought; they thrive: when bold,
Each tempts the other again, and all are sold."

In the dedication to his play, Jonson castigates contemporary playwrights for that "their natures are inverted . . . that now, especially in dramatic, or as they term it, stage poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all license of offence to God and man is practised". One may be excused for thinking that some of the faults he chastises in others still stick to his own efforts. *Volpone* is a cynical, satirical, lecherous piece which is for adults and students, presumably, saved by its classical descent.

V.

JOFROI

Starring: Vincent Scotto, Henri Puopon and Annie Tionin. **Producer:** Marcel Pagnol. **Director:** Rene Pagnol. **Distributors:** G. C. T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 54 minutes.

This is an excellent example of the French ability to take an anecdote (it is little more) and to transmit it to the screen in visual terms. There is no wastage. The characters are few but essential. The scenery is there for the taking. The script is neatly and economically contrived so that after careful rehearsal, the cameraman can take over under the supervision of director and leave little footage to lie sadly on the cutter's floor. The cost is negligible compared with the fantastic overheads customary elsewhere. The result is a modest but vastly entertaining piece of cinema.

Marcel Pagnol made *Jofroi* in 1933. (*Marius* and *Fanny* came in 1931 and 1932 respectively: an interesting comparison.) Alas! not even the French have the same unsullied simplicity in film-making. There are signs that they too, have been touched with the corrupting finger that has mummified the majority of films from other countries.

Still, it is not to be thought that, in order to capture the secret of French film-making at its best one has only to imitate its method and take a

small team to a pastoral location with a peasant fable in script form. There is required in addition that special quality of artistic sensibility, of humanity, of realism which, notwithstanding the fact that many French films are bad technically and ethically, all the best French films possess.

Jofroi is an old peasant who, though he sells his orchard to his friend Fonce, will not allow the newcomer to cut down the fruit trees, now sterile, which he planted so many years ago. When his friend promises to leave the fruit trees intact in return for the income from the old man's annuity, he is still not satisfied. He is afraid that the trees will be uprooted after his death. He threatens suicide which causes poor Fonce to be blamed for pestering the old man. Eventually Jofroi dies from natural causes and Fonce is free to pull up his trees—but he leaves a few of them standing in memory of the old man who loved them so much.

A charming little film, amusing and refreshing for its simplicity and technical integrity. V.

LIFE BEGINS TOMORROW

Starring: Andre Labarthe, Jean-Paul Sartre, Daniel Lagarche, Jean Rostand, Le Corbusier, Picasso, André Gide, with Jean-Pierre Aumont. **Producer:** Armand Rubin. **Distributors:** Blue Ribbon Films and Cameo-Polytechnic. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A.

By now most people know that existentialism is materialism with the lid off, and that Jean-Paul Sartre, one of its chief exponents, has made it perfectly clear: "that God is dead" and that man is master of his own fate. This well-made, lively documentary preachés in quite an unabashed manner a material conception of life. Point is given to its purpose by introducing that very fine young actor, Jean-Pierre Aumont, who becomes a sort of symbol of a golden scientific new world.

The film opens with Jean-Pierre trying to thumb a lift to Paris. The people of the dull past pass him by . . . presently a helicopter swoops from the sky and a mysterious person, André Labarthe, flies him to Paris. From now on, André Labarthe, in a courteous manner, forces himself on

this young man who has come to see the sights of Paris. He begins by jeering at him for wanting to see such dead things as churches and museums and the catacombs when all around him "miracles" are happening. Jean-Pierre falls for the clap-trap and allows himself to be introduced to Jean-Paul Sartre, who appears on the screen in person. Sartre gives Jean-Pierre a long existentialist sermon, which is a mixture of heresy and half truths, which he swallows whole and which changes his conception of life.

The young man must be thoroughly indoctrinated so we soon find him having a friendly chat with the psychoanalyst, Daniel Lagarche, who, of course, washes out the whole idea of original sin and makes the sub-conscious mind the scape-goat for the sins of the world. Jean-Pierre has an amazing gift for meeting celebrities. Now we find him chatting away with Jean Rostand, the biologist, about the future scientific world where sex transformation in animals and human beings are a current event, and where artificial insemination, fatherless children, test-tube pregnancy are accepted facts of the world.

Jean-Pierre certainly goes to town. He meets all the so-called leaders of modern thought . . . Le Corbusier, in one of whose dream-flats he sleeps; Picasso, the modern painter, and André Gide, the writer.

The film ends with a crowd of youngsters cheering Jean-Pierre as he climbs in a helicopter. Cheering, I suppose, a new convert of Jean-Paul Sartre and Co. E.

PLUS DE VACANCES POUR LE BON DIEU

Starring: Armontel, Laurence Aubray, Balpetre. **Distributors:** G.F.D.

Running time: 82 minutes.

This film is from the play by Paul Armont and Paul Vandenberghe, "Boys, Girls and Dogs". It is about a gang of kids who begin kidnapping dogs for fun and are so successful that they continue to kidnap more and more dogs for money. Wealthy people will pay large sums to regain lost dogs. Whether this piece is meant to be just a mere farce or whether it has some sort of sociological axe to grind, I couldn't quite make out. I found it only mildly amusing. E.

DOCUMENTARIES

THE FAITH IN WALES

Produced by Christopher Radley.
Commentary spoken by Ben Williams. Category: C. Running time: 20 minutes.

The film as a missionary aid has not yet been thought of enough by Catholic authorities. This beautifully photographed story of the first church in Great Britain to be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima indicates what could be done to stimulate our ignorant people with enthusiasm for the glories of the ages of Faith.

Making use of the monuments and ancient sites once dedicated to the service of God in Wales, the story of the growth and decay of the Catholic Faith is outlined. The work of the Methodists in stemming the utter decay of religion is touched on and the conversion of a pre-existing building into the Catholic Church at Bala is described.

Credit to Christopher Radley

Though some of the earlier scenes on the lakes and in the mountains are, perhaps a little long-drawn-out, the film as a whole is carefully edited and nicely balanced in a pleasantly composed whole which does great credit to the producer. Mr. Radley will be remembered for his film *Actions Not Words* made for the Holy Child Sisters of Mayfield some years ago as well as for the interesting and instructive films, *Your Inheritance* and *Mission to Seamen*, made for the Church of England. Religious Orders and others interested in the idea of film to tell the story of their activities might well consider the implications of *Faith in Wales*. It shows what can be done.

CHRISTIAN FACTORY

Produced by Alan Turner. 16mm., 2 reels. Running time: 19 minutes. Obtainable from Spa Lane Mills, Derby, and Catholic Film Institute.

It is an important part of the work of the Catholic Film Institute to foster a constructive attitude towards film as a powerful means of propaganda. Catholics need make no apology for using a word which has come to have an ugly sound for they, more than

most, understand its true meaning. To propagate truth is one of the reasons of the existence of the Church. The fact that politicians have misused this beautiful word does not prevent the Church continuing to use the word and to suit its action to the true purpose of the word.

To use film for propaganda purposes, therefore, is, with us, to make a film which will help to spread understanding of some facet of the Faith. In this sense, the work done by Alan Turner is of importance. His films are never intended merely to fill up a space in a programme; they are made with a definite purpose, that of shedding light, in the literal sense, on the social teaching of the Church.

Leon Harmel,

Apostle of Christian Practice

His latest effort is *Christian Factory*, which introduces to English-speaking audiences the factory at Val de Bois in France, where Leon Harmel, of blessed memory, worked out his system of co-operative and Christian endeavour in accordance with the mind of the Church. It was, indeed, largely due to the counsel and practice of Leon Harmel, that Pope Leo XIII came to crystallise in unforgettable phrases, the mind of the Church in this matter. Alan Turner is doing a great service to students of Catholic social philosophy in thus bringing to their notice the labours of a great apostle of Christian social practice.

Mr. Turner speaks the commentary to the film and outlines the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching. Meanwhile, we are taken on a tour of the factory and introduced to the present members of the Harmel family and to many of the factory committee during their celebrations on the Feast of Corpus Christi. The film makes an admirable centre-piece to a discussion or conference on *Rerum Novarum* and should prove popular with all those who want to know what can be done to put the Social Encyclicals into practical effect. Together with Mr. Turner's other films, particularly *Sacrifice We Offer* and *Family Affair*, a very useful study period could be organised.

J. A. V. B.

From Our Educational Panel

GEOGRAPHY

LIBRARIES

G.B.I. Film Library, Aintree Road,
Perivale, Greenford, Middx.
Common Ground Ltd., Sydney Place,
S.W.7.

FILMS

The Seasons

G.B.I. Sound film in colour with
teacher's notes.

This film is composed of three short
films which can be shown separately or
in sequence.

1. The Round World and the
Sun's Rays.
2. The Earth and its movement
round the Sun.
3. Seasonal changes in Temperate
Regions.

The first shows the effect of latitude
on temperature, the second shows the
rotation and revolution of the earth
and the effect produced on temperature
and on the length of day and night.
The third shows the changes of
temperature through the year in
temperate latitudes as contrasted with
the tropical and arctic regions. The
whole film shows a rotating and
revolving model of the globe, with
arrows for emphasis since no words
appear on the screen, as it is meant
for international use.

These films do not aim to be
exhaustive but only to show those
features which are so difficult to
demonstrate especially simultaneous
rotation and revolution; they do not
aim to teach so much as to make a
summary of the teacher's lessons and
consequently should be worked into the
scheme of lessons and not shown
haphazardly. They are worthy
successors to Latitude and Longitude
and Day and Night.

Age 14 and over.

Tropical Forest Village

G.B.I. F. 4657. Hiring price : 7s. 6d.;
mute version, 5s. 6d.

This short film gives a very
sympathetic study of the rhythm of
native life on the Congo forest edge
where "shifting agriculture" is
practised and a complete shift is

shown—the clearing of the new ground,
the use of wood-ash as fertiliser, the
building of new huts, the family
removal, and the various types of work
done in a self-sufficing community.
The seasonal rhythm is followed by the
diurnal rhythm as the daily work is
followed by a night of dancing.

Suitable for all ages.

The

Salmon Industry of British Columbia

G.B.I. F.978. 1 reel. Hire : 7s. 6d.

This film was made to be a little
different from others on the same
topic; it emphasises the physical basis
of the industry and explains the life-
cycle of the salmon by an animated
diagram. This is followed by a most
remarkable shot of the surge of salmon
up the rivers and waterfalls.

All sequences are taken from the
Namu canning factory, located on the
map, from which boats set out in pairs
and with their sieve-net encircle the
fish. Back at the factory the fish are
unloaded onto a conveyor belt, pass
through the Iron Chink on to the
canning room and into the steam-
cooker—the whole process completed
in 24 hours.

Suitable for all ages.

STRIPS

North Ireland

C.G.A. B.561. Regional Geography
of Ireland, Part I.)

This strip is designed for class use
up to 16 years and is accompanied by
a wealth of notes suggesting topics for
juniors and seniors.

The 46 frames deal with the six
counties of Northern Ireland and the
aim is to show it as an important
physical region with its focus on the
Lough Neagh Basin, its surrounding
mountain masses crossed by route-
ways which have linked Belfast with
its hinterland and made it the great
port. This is brought out by good
maps at intervals.

The section on scenery is particularly
good and shows by excellent photo-
graphs examples of a rejuvenated
peneplain, raised beach, fault, ship

platform, volcanic region and of several glacial features, so that both deep-seated earth movements and erosional factors are shown to influence the diversity of the countryside. This diversity is emphasised in the farming section.

The industrial section reminds us that this part is more heavily industrialised than the rest of Ireland, and that the main manufacturing centre and outlet is Belfast.

Suitability: 11 and over.

West Central Scotland and

East Central Scotland

C.G.A. B.481 and B.482.

The aim of these two film strips is to show where and how the people of the Central Lowlands live, and the geographical background which controls their lives. The introductory physical map in each is sufficiently extensive to show the chief features of relief and of communications, of the neighbouring Highlands and Southern Uplands as well as of the Central Lowlands, and to emphasise the contrasts between these regions with the advantages all in favour of the Lowlands.

West Central Scotland: The five frames devoted to the countryside and types of farming in Ayrshire and the Clyde Valley give some idea of the life of the rural population and in the absence of climatic maps give a good indication of the weather. The nine frames on coal, iron and steel show that this region was influenced early by the Industrial Revolution; the map shows the location of the coalfields, and the pictures show the type of work, and conditions of work in the old collieries and in the oldest iron works, and also the conditions of life in the old miners' houses, and in the towns huddled round the works.

Other industries shown are cotton, tobacco, carpets and sugar. Industry is not easily shown in film strips but these pictures are well chosen.

The rest of the strip deals with Glasgow and the Clyde. Glasgow developed as a market town at a natural route centre, but now is a city of 1,000,000 inhabitants due to industrial development; the significance of its river is well shown in good views over its docks and shipyards, and over its playgrounds too.

The final frame, a population map, epitomises the whole strip — the dominance of the West Central Lowlands over the high land to north and to south, and also over its eastern counterpart.

East Central Scotland: Several frames, introducing a certain amount of physical geography, show that the Lowlands are by no means a plain since there are many igneous masses and isolated volcanic necks which are more resistant than the sedimentaries which compose the lower land; and others suggest such topics as faultings, raised beaches and glaciation.

The farming section clearly shows the effect of the drier climate in the Eastern Lowlands upon the crops and animal husbandry.

Industrially the east is shown to be relatively less important than the west but the pictures of the new deep colliery in Fifeshire, both above and below ground, suggest the future of the coal industry will be east rather than west. The light industries, textiles, paper, printing, preserves and the fishing industry are adequately shown.

Much importance is attached to the reason for the development of towns other than industrial centres, and so the strip ends on the all-important question of transport.

The two strips together give an excellent account of the Lowlands as the home of 75 per cent of Scotland's population.

Age: 11 and over.

Exploring the Landscape— Snow and Ice

C.G.A. B.542.

This strip is one of a series designed to make a "pictorial dictionary" for the 8 to 11 years group, of the more common geographical terms used in describing landscape.

It begins with a snowstorm in a street, and then takes the children further afield, outside their own experience, to a blizzard in the mountains and so to the snowfields and resulting avalanches and glaciers. Then the scene is the arctic wastes with their icebergs, pancake ice and icefloes. And finally comes the effect of snow and ice in disrupting land and water transport.

Items of Interest

Focus Film Course

We are glad to be able to announce that the first of two series of twelve lectures on the subject of film has been inaugurated at More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

The lectures take place at fortnightly intervals at 3 p.m. on Saturday afternoons. The February lectures are on the 10th and 24th of the month. They are under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Buchanan and are organised by the Catholic Film Institute.

The lectures are open to all who are interested in studying the development of the cinema, both as an industry and as an art. The speakers will be drawn from all sections of the industry in addition to Dr. Buchanan and Father Burke, who will jointly be responsible for the introductory talks.

Each lecture will be followed by an open discussion and it is hoped to make these occasions a forum for all those who wish to see the cinema used for the benefit of humanity.

The fee for the full course of twelve lectures is one guinea (£1 1s.). Individual lectures, 2s. 6d.

Prospectus and all details from Film Secretary, More House, 63 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

Record for Fatima Film

Over 3,000 people from all parts of London were present at an afternoon showing of the film: *Pilgrimage To Fatima* in the Croydon Cinema, on January 21st. The film was introduced by Fr. Christie, S.J., who is one of the film-reviewers for this publication.

Full credit must go to Mr. David Murphy, the Catholic publisher, who was the creator and the sole organiser of this successful undertaking, from which the Catholic Film Institute will gain a goodly sum which it badly needs. Many thanks and congratulations to David Murphy.

We hope that the example of David Murphy will inspire many more of our friends to go and do likewise.

"Murder in the Cathedral"

A Studio Exhibition of sets, properties and costumes used in the G. M. Hoellering production of the film version of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, opened for the press by the Bishop of London, Dr. J. W. C. Wand, on January 19th, at St. Stephen's Church,* Avenue Road, N.W.8. Short addresses were delivered by Mr. T. S. Eliot, Rev. John Groser and the Rev. N. A. Perry-Gore (Vicar of St. Stephen's).

The film version of *Murder in the Cathedral* has been produced and directed by G. M. Hoellering. Mr. Eliot has written a number of entirely new scenes especially for the film. He himself plays the part of the "Fourth Tempter" in the film.

After a long search for a suitable actor to play Archbishop Thomas Becket, Mr. Hoellering one Sunday heard the Rev. John Groser preach in church, and immediately realised that he had found the right man at last. He offered him the part and, after consultation with his superiors, the Rev. Groser accepted. Other parts are being played by Mark Dignam, Niall McGinnis, Alban Blakelock, George Woodbridge and Beryl Calder.

For the production of his film, Mr. Hoellering obtained the vicar's permission to use the former Church of St. Stephen's, in St. John's Wood, as his studio. Inside this church sets were erected, showing Canterbury Cathedral and its adjacent buildings as they appeared in the 12th century. All sets, costumes and properties were hand-made (even the material for some of the dresses was hand-woven) after models in various museums and collections, so as to achieve the maximum faithfulness to the style of the period.

The world-premiere of *Murder in the Cathedral* will take place later in the year, and the film will be distributed throughout the United Kingdom by Film Traders Ltd.

Pope Speaks on Public Opinion

"To stifle the opinions of citizens, to reduce them forcibly to silence is, in the eyes of every Christian, an outrage on the natural rights of man, a violation of the order of the world as established by God."

"Where public opinion fails to manifest itself, where it does not exist at all—whatever the reason—this must be regarded as something vicious, a malady, a disease of social life."

"Would you dare to state with assurance that the majority of men are apt to judge and appreciate facts and trends at their true value, so that opinion is guided by reason?"

"In all it is and does, the Catholic Press must set up an insuperable barrier to continuous retreat, to the dissipation of conditions fundamental to healthy public opinion."

"The press has an eminent rôle to play in the formation of opinion, not by dictating or regimenting it but by serving it usefully."

"Catholic journalists will always refrain from 'making' opinion. Better, they will aspire to service it."

"Because the Church is a living body, something would be wanting in Her life if public opinion were lacking."

"The Catholic writer will know how to guard himself against mute servility as well as against uncontrolled criticism."

The above statements were made by the Holy Father when he addressed the International Convention of the Catholic Press at Vatican City.

BOOK REVIEWS

By J. A. V. B.

Church and Film. Bi-monthly magazine of the British Churches Film Council. December-January 1950-51. 1s.

We are glad to notice this magazine, both because it is a good thing to have Churches of whatever denomination, taking a positive interest in film and also because there is much practical information as to the use of film in religious circles which will surely be of use to our Catholic schools and parishes.

The present issue carries reports of various conferences as well as a complete review coverage of new religious films and strips, some of which might well be of use to our readers.

The Editor seeks to know whether notes on secular films generally released would be acceptable to his readers. I would suggest that it cannot but be a good thing for any religious periodical to take a constructive view of the films which take the largest number of people to the cinema. In this way it is possible gradually to awaken and develop a sense of responsibility in those of our people who frequent the secular cinema.

Children and the Cinema. By J. C. Ward. The Social Survey. Central Office of Information, 10s. 6d.

This is a roneoed publication of some 100 pages giving statistical charts and analyses based on an enquiry made in October 1948 for the purposes of the Departmental Committee set up by the Home Secretary to study the question of children and the cinema.

Like all such publications, it is a bewildering and unprepossessing mass of figures and tables which at first sight are rather repelling. However, it is well worth while delving into

the matter provided. The overall impression is that children are much more intelligent and have a more positive reaction to the cinema than is generally conceded by social workers in this field. Granted that statistics are apt to mislead the untutored, and that one can misinterpret regional findings, there is, on the whole, a healthy tone about the answers of most of the children which leaves one with the conviction that if only they can be guided in film appreciation as they grow through adolescence to maturity, there is a not-inconsiderable hope that the cinema of the future will be more in accord with what all workers for Catholic Film Action desire. Certain it is that on parents primarily, it rests to ensure that the cinema does not harm their children.

Spotlight On Films. By Egon Larsen. pp. 301. Max Parrish, London, 15s.

The author calls his book a "Primer for Film-Lovers" and though one may not agree that it is the best book of its kind that has ever appeared, it is certainly entertainingly written and very agreeably produced. In a Foreword, Sir Michael Balcon writes that Egon Larsen had the intention "to tell the story of the development of the film as an art; secondly, to follow up the course of present-day film-making through all its fascinating stages; and thirdly, to outline the mutual influence of the film on mankind and vice-versa in various countries".

It was to enable him to achieve the second part of his scheme that he sought and obtained the assistance of the technical staff of Ealing Studios. This is the most successful part of the book. By means of illustrations in photography, line-drawing and quotation, he manages to provide as satisfactory a guide to what goes on in

a studio as can be expected within the 107 pages he allows himself for this purpose.

The first part which traces the history of the cinema is marred by irritating comments of a political character which appear every now and then in the text. It is also wearying to have the interpretation of political angles in films underlined, in the manner of E. W. and M. M. Robson in "The Film Answers Back". One realises the power of the film as a propaganda weapon, but in a "Primer for Film-Lovers", one could do with rather less of the Left-Wing pleading with which the author interlards his

otherwise pleasingly-written narrative.

The third section, subtitled "You and the Film", follows the customary course of essays on the influence of the cinema. One does not look for original theories in such a book as this and it would be unfair to blame the writer because the ideas he throws out are not developed. Suffice it to say that "Spotlight on Films" is a handy and nice-looking volume for those who want to gain sufficient knowledge about film-making to be able to talk intelligently on the subject. Like all spotlights, it tends to throw its subject somewhat out of context here and there.

A Slight Case of Treason

A correspondent has expressed astonishment that we urged people to see the film, *Treason*, in spite of what the critics might say about it. Our friend misunderstood our reason for this short-circuiting the verdicts of the professional critics. It was not based on disregard for the canons of criticism; rather the contrary, for we were fairly sure that dislike of the film would flow from unwillingness or inability to see that what this film was trying to say was more important than the way it said it. It tried to tell something of the truth about the internal state of a country which it is now expedient to ignore.

The Trade Press gave it adequate welcome as a film worth seeing. "Stern yet showmanlike political melodrama, semi-documentary in treatment, reminding all that freedom of thought, speech and deed is barred behind the iron curtain . . . Topical to say the least . . . Potential box-office 'turn-up' " (*Kine Weekly*).

Contrast this with the following, from the organ of an organisation

which is subsidised to teach appreciation of film as an art: "Its interest, however, is considerable, as an example of what can happen when a film exploits contemporary political events, basing its appeal solely on prejudice, and so, in fact, damaging its own cause".

Pius XI spoke of the power of the film "to champion the cause of justice". Here is an example of a film, made by a team of Jews and Christians, against all manner of sabotage, trying to do just that. *Treason* was made with the object of trying to spread the truth about the persecution of truth in Hungary. The secular press critics have failed to understand or have been unwilling to admit that the "trial" of Cardinal Mindszenty was a judicial farce.

It is not claimed that the film is an outstanding piece of film art. But we do suggest that the opposition to the film was based on something other than critical sensitiveness to poor cinematography.

Cover

Personality

Spencer Tracy

The Catholic Stage Guild of Ireland presented their Statuette of St. Patrick, awarded for the screen actor of the year, to Spencer Tracy. This award, one of six which the Catholic Stage Guild offers each year to outstanding members of the allied dramatic arts, was conferred upon Spencer Tracy by a jury enlisted from various countries. The Catholic Film Institute had some part in this award, since its Honorary Secretary is a member of the panel asked to advise on the award. The choice of Spencer Tracy was unanimous.

Mr. Tracy is one of the few actors who, without the arts of glamorisation which assist the careers of many well-known names of screen and stage, achieve front-rank fame purely on personality and hard work. His entry into the world of film from the world of stage was untrumpeted. It dates back twenty years, since when not a year has passed without Spencer Tracy appearing in a leading rôle, in some way, off the beaten track. That is a testimony, not so much to the intelligence of the producers of the films as to the fact that, whatever the rôle, however trite or unbelievable, Tracy has always managed to bring to it some quality of personality which invested it with an often undeserved merit.

It may interest readers to have some of his outstanding films. Beginning with *Up The River* (1930) we have *Young America* and *Society Girl* (1932), *Dante's Inferno* (1935), *Fury*, *San Francisco* (1936), *Captains Courageous*, *Big City* (1937), *Boys Town* (1938), *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939),

Edison, *Boom Town* and *Northwest Passage* (1940), *Men of Boys Town* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), *The Seventh Cross* (1944), *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1945), *The State of the Union* (1948).

His more recent films are probably better remembered by our readers, though they have not been better films. The flair for comedy which he has lately exploited in the films with Katherine Hepburn and in this year's *Father of the Bride* illustrate another side of a versatile talent. It is, perhaps, just as well that he has not been too obviously "typed", or had films devised as "vehicles" for him. Nevertheless, it is true, I think, that he has not been too well served by the script-writers. The films that stand out in one's mind are those in which he has impressed his characters upon them rather than those which were, of their character outstanding. So, for me, *Captains Courageous* is memorable for his playing of the Italian seaman who understands and befriends the snobbish little boy, played by Freddy Bartholomew. In this film one realised how little make-up had to do with Spencer Tracy's character-parts. Their conviction and strength came from within.

For that reason, it has always seemed to me that he is the most convincing of the many film "priests" who have made their uncertain way across the screen. Of his priest rôles, the most pleasing is that in *San Francisco*; before it had become film-fashionable to put favourite film stars in Roman collars to capture the approval of the sentimental. The air of casual routine which he managed to bring to his part carried far more weight than the laboured efforts to appear priestly which we have had from some more recent wearers of the celluloid band.

Of his other film parts, *Stanley*, in *Stanley and Livingstone*, the Major in *Northwest Passage* and the adventurer in *Dante's Inferno* stand out among his best.

Born in Milwaukee in 1900, he is still as great a favourite as when he first attracted attention as an actor and still as youthful in spirit and as mature in judgment. He is a conscientious craftsman who plays his piece without fuss or temperament. A fine actor and a good man.

JOHN VINCENT.

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

MARCH 1951

No. 3

THE WORK GOES ON FOR YOU

Focus Film Course

There will be only one lecture in this series during March. It will be on Saturday March 10th, at 3 p.m. and the subject will be *The Commercial Cinema Programme*. It will be delivered, we hope, by Edward Carrick, the famous film designer.

The lectures aim at providing a complete survey of the film industry, as a preliminary to a study of production and appreciating films in two further series of lectures. It is our view that any person wishing to be well-informed about the power of the cinema (and with those in charge of children this is a duty) must acquaint himself with the ramifications, both commercial and functional, of the cinema.

The Syllabus (post free from Blue Cottage, Summer Place Mews, London, S.W.7.) may serve as a basis for a similar course in other parts of the country.

Summer Film Course

Pressure of work in other directions will prevent us organising a Summer Course this year. Apart from the expense involved, which is considerable and hardly ever recouped, our available staff will be occupied with the film section of the Festival of Britain Catholic Exhibition, which we have been invited to support. This takes place in London during the middle of August.

If some of our members care to try the organisation of a Course elsewhere, we shall be glad to applaud their efforts and would be willing to do what we could to support them.

Lecture and Film Show

We were able to hold a Film Show at Westminster Cathedral Hall on February 8th in aid of the C.F.I. funds. At two performances we collected £20, which after expenses, left us with the welcome sum of £13. The films shown were *Rome of the Pilgrims*, *Crucifers to Walsingham* and *Pilgrimage to Fatima*.

Lectures and film shows have been given at Thornton Heath on behalf of A.C.T.U. at Bayswater, and on behalf of St. John's and Elizabeth's Hospital at Cavendish Square Convent, London, and at the John Fisher School, Purley.

National Film Institute of Ireland

We are delighted to learn that the Irish Hierarchy has designated the National Film Institute of Ireland to represent Ireland on the General Council of O.C.I.C. as an affiliated member. Congratulations! The more moral support for the constructive approach to the problems of promoting good motion pictures the better, and we are sure that Ireland, with its sound moral and cultural sense, will be a tower of strength in the deliberations of O.C.I.C.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 3: *How Red Is Hollywood?*

By

Declan Flynn, O.F.M.



Red Skelton, Louis B. Mayer, Jane Powell

I remember with delight my visit to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, a little cosmos of its own, in Culver City, whose white shining buildings cover a space of 170 acres, wherein you get the "feel" of great creative activity, artistic planning, order, co-ordination and accomplishment. In this picture-world everything and everybody appears to be really alive, which, I suppose, is as it should be, for ideas are the most alive things in the world; after all what are films but the pictorialisation of ideas, the expression of life in a most popular medium? Film artists are people who bring "stills" to life.

This visit was arranged for me by Mr. Mervyn McPherson, who has always been a good friend of the Catholic Film Institute and who has accorded me, as editor of *Focus*, many kindnesses and courtesies. I was received cordially by Mr. Bob Vogel, his opposite number in Culver City. After a chat and so on I was placed in the kind keeping of Frank Sherlock, a handsome young Catholic fellow, who for the next six hours was my guide, encyclopedia and friend.

Demonstration Against Communism

"Guess you've come on the right day, Father," said Frank, as to the beat of innumerable typewriters we zigzagged our way through thick



Dore Schary explains the principles underlying the demonstration

carpeted corridors into a wide open space where the sun was shining goldenly and where palm trees like green flags were fluttering gaily. Suddenly a siren sounded. Like clockwork, doors from all angles swung apart . . . stars, straight from the sets, in colourful costumes, workmen, artisans, artists, producers, directors, script-writers, camera-men, 3,000 people from all stratas of the film world, in disorderly order, began walking towards a square in front of the Irving Thalberg building, which is the M.-G.-M. executive building.

It might have been a rehearsal for some gigantic film saga. In point of fact it was a demonstration against Communism. It was the launching of a "Crusade of Freedom". Frank Sherlock told me that similar demonstrations were being held at the same time in all the other studios in Hollywood. He put me into a position where I could see all that was going on. The façade of the Irving Thalberg building, which was erected in

Thalberg's honour, was draped with the American Colours. On the platform there were representatives of all branches of the Motion Picture Industry. Louis B. Mayer was there, of course, and Dore Schary (Vice-President of all M.-G.-M. productions), and Arthur Freed and Jack Cummings and Joe Pasternak, who is musical producer for the life of Caruso, which at the moment is being made. Among the stars were Jane Powell, who is a practical Catholic, Ann Blythe, Jean Kelly, David Brian, Fred Astaire, Red Skelton, Dorothy Kirsten, a new metropolitan star-artist who is playing in the Caruso film.

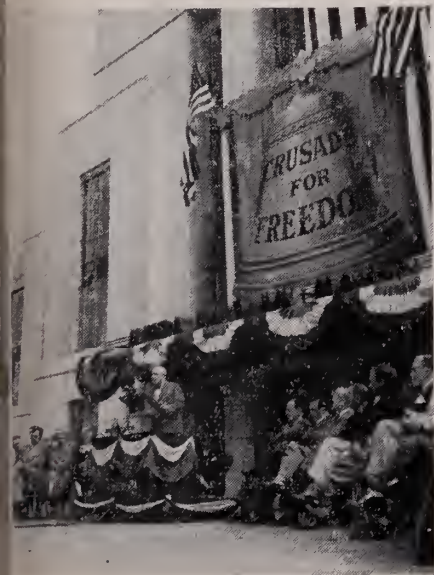
General Eisenhower Talks

The demonstration opened with a relayed address by General Eisenhower. Among other things he said :

"Communitic aggression, inspired by fear, carries with it the venom of those who feel themselves to be inferior. This accounts for the depth of their hatred, and the intensity of their thirst for power."

"To destroy human liberty and to control the world the Communists use every conceivable weapon : subversion, bribery, corruption, military attack. Of all these, none is more insidious than propaganda."

"The Crusade for Freedom will provide for the explanation of Radio Free Europe into a network of stations. They will give the simplest, clearest charter in the world : Tell the truth. For it is certain that all the specious promises of Communism to the needy, the unhappy, the frustrated, the down-trodden, cannot stand against the proven record of democracy and its day by day progress in the betterment of all mankind. The tones of the Freedom Bell, symbol of the Crusade will echo under vast areas now under blackout."



Louis B. Mayer speaks to his employees



Demonstration against Communism in Hollywood

"In this battle you and I have a definite part to play during the Crusade. Each of us will have the opportunity to sign the Freedom Scroll. It bears a declaration of our faith in freedom, and of our belief in the dignity of the individual who derives the right of Freedom from God. Each of us by signing the scroll pledges to resist aggression and tyranny wherever they appear on the earth."

The General then asked all to sign the Scroll of Freedom and to give a donation to help on the work of Radio Free Europe.

Dore Schary Explains

"When you sign the Freedom Scroll," said Dore Schary, "this is what you declare."

I believe in the sacredness and dignity of the individual.

I believe that all men derive the right of freedom equally from God. I pledge to resist aggression and tyranny wherever they appear on earth.

He then pointed out that the purpose of the Radio Free Europe was the eventual piercing and destruction of the Iron Curtain.

"Radio Free Europe is devoted to the cause of reaching inside men's minds and hearts. The objective is to destroy the intellectual Iron Curtain with the Big Truth about the Big Lie."

Louis B. Mayer then spoke in a fatherly extempore way and re-affirmed the truth that of all men of good will who loved democracy and the Christian

standards of living should fight in the crusade against Communism.

Atmosphere of Sincerity

My pictures give an idea of the lay-out of this Crusade; they cannot convey its psychological and spiritual atmosphere. There was present that sort of atmosphere of sincerity which is generated by a people who are in sympathy with ideals which they are demonstrating. I felt that all these people hated Communism and that there was no great fear of it poisoning the wells of the film industry.

Freedom of the Movie City

After an American lunch I was, so to speak, given the freedom of this fascinating movie-city. A sort of electric "jaunting car" runs from block to block and you are free to hop on and off as you please. Frank Sherlock took me everywhere. Apart from the usual departments that are to be seen in any film studio, M.-G.-M. run a school, a hospital, a restaurant, dentist apartments, bars, shops and soda fountains. Everyone was most friendly and most anxious to impart information on his particular interest. Perhaps because I am woefully if not wilfully deficient in mechanical matters, my admiration went out mostly to those men in the departments where light and sound are married so deftly and so magnificently.

In one of the studios we saw and enjoyed some shooting of a film called *The Royal Wedding*, in which Fred Astaire and Jane Powell star and dance. Fred Astaire was causing great amusement with a real live monkey which co-stars with him! The director was not easily satisfied, he made them repeat again and again this particular dancing sequence.

All that I saw on this particular day last September made me realise more

than ever the power of the cinema, and affirmed my belief that the Apostolate of the Cinema is a timely and important one.

Before I left I had a long chat with Frank Sherlock. He told me that most people in Hollywood lead a normal life; he seemed rather amused at the still current idea that sin and cinema must necessarily go hand in glove. He showed me photos of his wife and children and then asked me if I would like to see the church which he and his family attended. The Church of St. Augustine's stands on the high-road and dominates the M.-G.-M. studios. In one of the side chapels I noticed a statue of the Little Flower, St. Teresa of Lisieux, which had been donated by a well known film star. It was in this rather plain little church that Ingrid Bergman used to hear Mass every morning while she was making her Joan of Arc film.

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THE SOCIOLOGIST LOOKS AT THE FILM

By THADDEUS KIDD, O.F.M.

"Far better a grain of gold than a ton of fantasy" could sum up the attitude of the contemporary sociologist. It might be considered common sense to say, and almost everyone who has written on the films has said, that the film exercises an immense influence on society. But common sense is not sociology. Sociology is the scientific, objective study of social phenomena. America now leads the world in sociological research, and the tendency there is to concentrate on restricted sections of social life, examining the problem minutely from different angles—economic, psychological, biological, etc. From such a study of a very limited field, as for example a factory or a small town, one can arrive at a fair picture of the object.

Beyond Accomplishment

How can the sociologist possibly tackle such a vast subject as the films, a world-wide sociological fact? In England alone 25 million people attend the cinema every week, as well as some 13 million children; America has 85 million weekly attenders. There are one hundred thousand cinemas all over the world; London alone has 400. The cinema industry now ranks as the third largest industry in the world. How can one study such a social phenomenon satisfactorily? In order to isolate the film influence on society, one would obviously require a profound knowledge of the myriad other factors that contribute to culture, and this for every country in the world and for the different districts in each country. No wonder, therefore, that the research of the Inter Departmental Committee on "Children and the Cinema" carried out in Great Britain, which had as its specific object the influence of the cinema on children, evaded giving an answer to this very question in its

Report. And note that this research was limited to one country and to one section of the community.

The Report, however, did help to establish the temerity of some sweeping generalisations that are so often heard and taken as *a priori* truths, as, for example, that the films are the cause of so much juvenile delinquency. On questioning those best able to answer such a question, viz., heads of approved schools, chief constables, probation officers, etc., it was found that the relationship between film attendance and juvenile crime was not something that could be taken for granted. Six hundred of these qualified observers thought there was a connection and six hundred and eight thought there was not. Even statements made by children themselves, to the effect that their undesirable actions were due to what they had seen on the films, were found in cases to be worthless. Commenting on these statements, the Report says: "When some of these allegations were investigated by the research students to whom they were made, they turned out quite baseless as evidence against the cinema . . . similar behaviour followed other and different forms of excitement and of recreation."

American Attempts

Has the sociologist attempted any scientific research work in this domain? He has, and as we might expect, this work has been carried on chiefly in the United States. The work done is minute in view of the vastness of the subject, but these modest, controlled studies do at least contribute something of an answer to the question of film influence on social conduct.

The bulk of research on motion pictures was carried out by the American Committee on Educational Research of the Payne Fund. Note that these tests were carried out on children, who are obviously more impressionable than adults. The Payne investigations lasted for four years, and the results were published in twelve volumes. Two of these research workers, Holaday and Stoddard, concentrated on an interesting point, which adults often forget in assessing the influence of films on children, viz., how much of the film does the child actually see? Their research showed that out of a possible one hundred items, adults note 87.8 per cent of the items; children between 14 and 15, 80.9 per cent; children between 10 and 11 observe 65.9 per cent and youngsters between 7 and 8 only see 52.5 per cent of the items.

Unexpected Results

May and Shuttleworth studied carefully selected groups of 516 frequent child movie-goers and 543 infrequent child movie-goers, to find the effect, if any, of frequent cinema attendance on conduct. Their findings were interesting and sometimes unexpected. On the question of criminals, for example, it was found that many popular conceptions of the child's view of the film criminal were unfounded. The children did not think that criminals were brave, courageous, nervy individuals who were honourable in their way. They did not think that gang leaders were good-looking, generous, etc. These child film fans believed that criminals were finally brought to justice and punished. They thought that many criminals did reform and become decent citizens.

On studying film influence from the point of view of sex, it was found that the movie children did not tend to believe in early marriage, nor did they believe that marriage is usually unsuccessful. They did not think that successful marriage depended on financial income. These children were of opinion that women exerted a strong influence in helping criminals to reform; they also, however, tended to expect and justify assaults or rudeness to women. Of the total number of comparisons made between the movie

and the non-movie groups, consisting of a great variety of tests, significant differences favouring the non-movie group appeared in about 8 per cent, while about 2 per cent favoured the movie group, and in the other 90 per cent there was no noted difference.

Attitude tests, given before and after films, demonstrated that it is possible to change children's attitudes by showing them a single film produced for the purpose of giving that effect. One very noticeable example is given by Peterson and Thurston in "Motion Pictures and Social Attitudes of Children", where it was revealed that the film, *The Birth of a Nation*, produced a marked expansion of the anti-negro attitude. However, tests given at later intervals to find out the persistence of these effects, revealed that, in general, opinions tended to revert to initial attitudes. In other words, the film is but one out of a multitude of factors helping to determine our social attitudes and manner of acting. A recent doctorate thesis presented at Catholic University, Washington, has as its conclusion: "As yet it is impossible to isolate the effects of the movie experience from other factors operating in the individual's life. It seems to operate rarely as a prime factor, but rather frequently as a subsidiary or aggravating component."

Two Way Traffic

Like any other sociological fact, the film both influences and is influenced by society. The influence of society is usually summed up in Box Office. Film making is a means of earning a livelihood and the more numerous the admission tickets sold the better the livelihood. Like any other manufacturer the film maker must give the public what it wants. He holds a sensitive finger on the pulse of public opinion and is quick to respond to changes in demand. For example at the beginning of the war, contrary to what one might have expected, the "escapist" film went out of vogue. Public taste moved towards "realism". Realistic films were therefore provided: *In Which We Serve*, *The First of the Few*, *The Way Ahead*, etc. American producers were not slow in following this British lead. The film influence is not one way

traffic. One might say that the film public indicates the direction in which it wants to be influenced, and it does that by buying tickets or not for a particular type of film.

The situation is different where film making is not a means of earning a livelihood, but is an instrument in the hands of the State. Where the film becomes the express tool of an ideology, and where it is allied to the press and the radio, so that counter influences are almost smothered, the influence of the film is greatly enhanced. A glance, for example, at some recent Russian films leaves no doubt as to their propaganda import: *The New Home*, dealing with the reconstruction of villages destroyed by the Germans; *The Young Guard*, on the heroism of Soviet youth around the Don region; *The Brandenburg Gate*, portraying the entry of Russian troops into Berlin; *The Mystery of the Oceans*, dealing with the exploits of Soviet submarines. In such an all-embracing propaganda setting, it becomes even more difficult to resolve our problem, for how is one to isolate the influence of any one of these factors?

A vast amount of scientific research must be done in this infant branch of sociology. Without this data, film moralists are like spinners devoid of their fabric. Kay Mander, in her review of J. P. Mayer's book "Sociology of Film", sounds a timely rallying cry: "Far too long, consideration of the film in relation to society has been left to the moralisers and reformers. It is time that objective studies were made, to answer conclusively the false assumptions about the influence of films on children, on morals, on political outlook, in fact on social behaviour generally . . . the bulk of the work remains to be done." To hope to answer conclusively such assumptions is indeed a tall order. It cannot in fact be satisfactorily achieved, but modest contributions, in the form of exact regional observations and, where possible, controlled experiments would take us some way along the road towards an answer to the sociological influence of the film. With such information, among other things, the task of those responsible for labelling "A" or "U" would be facilitated and would bear more relation to reality.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS

If one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days, the Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

To date £250 has been contributed which has been expended in part payment of the films *Rome of the Pilgrims* and *Crucifers to Walsingham*. There are many other religious subjects waiting to be treated if only we can obtain the money. It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Please send a donation to Rev. J. A. V. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

More in Sorrow than in Anger

A very distinguished gentleman who is a member-founder of a well-known group of Catholic Actionists some months ago reduced me to a state of gibbering impotence. Amiably mentioning our modest organ of publicity, *Focus*, he said, "I suppose one of the Hollywood film producers subsidises it for you?" When I had recovered I tried to explain the sad truth; but by that time he was gaily lamenting the difficulties which "real" Catholic Action groups have in keeping alive and I could not bring him back again to a consideration of the C.F.I.

Other friends and acquaintances have during the past year made similar statements, all bearing the implication, more or less delicately expressed, that those of us who spend our time at the hub of the C.F.I. are having a whale of a time and, doubtless, making a nice little something "on the side".

Only a Deficit

I suppose it is hard for the readers of the daily press, with its inevitable coupling of fantastic wealth with film enterprise, to understand that an organisation with the fascinating word "Film" in its title can be other than comparatively penurious with several millions of pounds in the bank.

Workers in the field of Catholic Action, however, might have been expected to appreciate the reality of the situation. No Catholic organisation known to us has any wealth to spare. Most of them are struggling bravely to maintain their works of charity or expediency on a budget that would make a miner think himself well-off. The C.F.I. is in no different case to the majority; with the exception that it has not even a budget, only a deficit!

The work which the C.F.I. is trying to do is demanded by the Holy Father. In order to do it, the support of as many Catholics as can be brought to realise the urgency of a positive Christian attitude to the cinema is

needed. At present this number is painfully small. The general public has been so indoctrinated with the idea that films must be glamorous and film reviews exotic that a review such as *Focus*, which attempts to evaluate films according to a Christian yardstick necessarily finds itself competing on unfair terms with magazines which deal mainly sensual appeals to adolescents.

Most of our members understand that they are being asked to assist in an apostolate which Pope Pius XI said will inevitably "involve a certain expense for Catholics of the various countries". They realise that their subscriptions help to keep the C.F.I. in existence. Unfortunately there are too few of them. Readers of *Focus* who are not members of the C.F.I. are also helping to keep the Apostolate of the Film in existence, but they will surely realise, if they reflect a little, that there can be no profit in producing such a periodical unless there is a very large circulation.

At the present figure, 6,000 copies per month, *Focus* still has a larger circulation than any other similar film review, but whereas other organisations which seek to uplift the film are subsidised at Government level or by private donations, the C.F.I. has no such support.

Dare We Ignore the Cinema?

We are particularly disappointed that our appeal to parishes and convents and colleges made by means of a circular last year, when 8,000 copies of "Dare We Ignore The Cinema?" were sent out all over the country had so little result. We thought and still think that every school and college in the country might take out at least a corporate membership subscription to the C.F.I. In view of the fact that those in charge of children have a special responsibility towards their charges with regard to the cinema, we feel that we have a

special claim on their support and understanding.

There are many other works in which the C.F.I. is involved which, of their nature, are unproductive. Consultations with regard to films, censorship points, reading of scripts submitted by studios, arranging lectures and film shows: this kind of work demands an office and staff for which, at present, there is no income.

We are, at the moment, negotiating for some rooms to serve as permanent offices. The rent required is very modest, but modest as it is, we shall find it extremely difficult to meet. We have trespassed far too long on the generosity of one or two devoted helpers. Our Chairman, our Hon. Treasurer, our Hon. Secretary have all prejudiced their health and their homes in an effort to keep the C.F.I. alive. We all believe it to be of vital importance. Will you who read this article consider the matter too? Can you do any more to bring us new members . . . new readers . . . volunteers for the many menial tasks which must be done but cannot be paid for, save in the realisation that a good work is being done.

How "Focus" Readers Can Help

Will each reader of Focus do three things? (1) Get a new reader; (2) Pass their copy to at least one other non-reader; (3) Discuss the reviews of films in Focus and be willing to understand that we are not dictating what films they should see but trying to give enough information to form their own judgments.

One further favour: you should be willing, occasionally, to stay away from a film that is valueless even though, negatively, its morals are sound.

If we could double our circulation we could improve the form and content of "Focus". At the moment, it is due mainly to the forbearance of our printers that the thing appears at all.

Will you do something about it? Thank you.

JOHN VINCENT.

FILM STRIP FATIMA TO-DAY

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O.C.I.C. GENERAL COUNCIL

This year's gathering of the General Council of the *Office Catholique International du Cinema* will take place at Lucerne, Switzerland, from May 25th to 28th.

The theme of discussions will be the "Film Critic and His Public". It is hoped that many distinguished critics, both Catholic and non-Catholic, will be present. The Swiss Government is taking a lively interest in the meeting and the Municipality of Lucerne is placing many facilities of a cultural and recreational character at the disposal of O.C.I.C.

If there are any of our members able to be present at Lucerne for the General Council we shall be glad to hear from them.

Letters to the Editor

Fatima Film Shows

Sir,

In order to avoid misunderstanding on the part of members of the C.F.I. and readers of *FOCUS*, will you allow me to correct a misapprehension which your report on the showing of the Fatima Film at the Davis Theatre, Croydon, may give rise to?

First of all, the C.F.I. does not, unfortunately, benefit from the showing of the Fatima film, at least, not materially. You see, we are under an obligation to see that the film is shown and though, ultimately, we hope that the selling of the rights of the film to other countries may bring in a sum sufficient for us to think of some profit, at the moment, the sums recouped from shows such as those at the Davis Theatre hardly cover the cost of other showings and the expenses connected therewith.

For example, the *Première* at the Palace Theatre involved an expenditure of £160 for the use of Theatre, etc. The collection taken on that occasion amounted to £75.

At the Davis Theatre, after the hiring fee, organiser's commission, advertising and printing expenses, etc. had been met, rather less than £50 remains of the £142 collected and this has to go straight into the Fatima Fund.

At the Hammer Theatre, the collections usually amounted to enough to pay for overhead costs, but little more. As the film has to be serviced, and Customs and other officials make large demands on any attempt to send a copy of the film abroad for viewing purposes, there is, you will appreciate, little left out of the collections to provide the "goodly sum" which the C.F.I. indeed "badly needs"!

The C.F.I. itself is, financially, considerably the worse off as a result of efforts expended on the Fatima film. But this, as a correspondent said to

us, seems to be the way the Lady of Fatima has of letting us share in the penance she spoke of!

Yours faithfully,

JOHN A. V. BURKE,

Hon. Sec. C.F.I.

Sir,

In the review of *The Big Store* (February, page 55) your printer has turned "humour" into "honour". Perhaps this note will help your readers to understand that I made no imputations against the honour of the Marx Brothers, which I am sure is life long, only the suggestion that even they cannot be expected to be funny for too long at a time.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

V.

Sir,

As a number of people seem to be under the impression that we used existing records for the choral music used in the film *Faith in Wales*, I should like to stress the fact that all the choral music, and there was no other, was recorded at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Trefriw, in North Wales.

Not only did the Welsh-speaking choir give their services, but the choir-master, Mr. Bert Williams, also contributed the solo part in "Land of Our Fathers".

I think this choir may take it as a compliment that their efforts have been mistakenly attributed to some disc-recorded professional body of singers!

It may be of additional interest that Mr. Williams is a member of the "Church of Wales" and choirmaster of their local church, who has for some time been helping the Catholic priest to train his choir.

Yours faithfully,

C. A. RADLEY.

FOCUS FILM COURSE. Part Two. No. 2

THE PRODUCER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Behind every great output of furniture, frocks, fish hooks or films there is a planner. However large or small an organisation, it cannot function smoothly unless its output is perfectly planned and, equally important, unless the work of all employed is co-ordinated. Insofar as films are concerned, the planner is the Producer who usually keeps well behind the scenes. At the highest level he is responsible for the entire output of films from a large studio, or group of studios, which may be turning out six or more feature films simultaneously.

What qualifications does such a man require?

He needs to possess many qualities obtainable only by having worked his way up through the various technical departments involved in production. Maybe he began as a clapper-boy, an assistant to an assistant, or in the script department, and he has almost certainly directed films himself. Without such thorough all-round knowledge of film-making he would be quite unable to pass judgment on each day's takes which he has to view regularly. Upon his word depends the approval or rejection of every scene. Consequently, he has to be a judge of direction, camerawork, recording, acting, decor and editing. Moreover, he has to control the speed at which films are being produced, iron out disputes, place stars under contract and plan the subjects which will constitute the output for the following year. Needless to say, in addition to all these duties, he is responsible for expenditure.

The Producer is the man who invariably selects subjects for production, and upon his judgment will

depend the financial success or failure of the entire organisation. This involves far more than a superficial knowledge of current literature and plays. Vision is essential, and an ability to see stories, whether original, or in book or play form, in visual terms. It is the Producer we have to thank for bringing us dramas and comedies set in distant places; for re-creating past periods, and for building up stories out of contemporary situations — red tape, shortages, gangsterism, and so on. It can be seen, therefore, that he is the man at the wheel, steering the huge ship across the stormy seas of film-making. He has been likened to the composer of a symphony, but he more closely resembles the conductor of a great orchestra (all the instruments in which he can play). He is a rare being, combining the astuteness and organising ability of a business executive with the vision of an artist, and the soul of a showman. There are lots of Producers in the film-making centres of the world, but the truly great ones may be counted on one's fingers.

FOCUS FILM COURSE PRIMER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Handbooks comprising introductory articles on all the lectures comprising the first series of the Focus Film Course are now available, price 1s. 6d. nett. Obtainable from More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7, or from Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*



HOLY PILGRIMAGE 1950

Producer: Edmund Reek. **Director:** Anthony Muto. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 42 minutes.

This not very happy title has been substituted for the original *Holy Year* 1950, presumably to prevent confusion

in this country with *Holy Year*, the picture popularly and conveniently known as the Wilfred Pickles' film. *Holy Pilgrimage* MCML is the American counterpart and "features" Cardinal Spellman. But though intended for Americans it is free from the sort of Americanism which the English find uncongenial and there is nothing about the excellent



commentary by Fr. R. I. Gannon, S.J., to grate on our ears.

The course of the Holy Year is traced from its proclamation on Ascension Day 1949—when among the ecclesiastics present Abbot Langdon, O.S.B., will be easily recognised by his many friends—to the procession in St. Peter's Square on Corpus Christi 1950. After a remarkable sequence showing the opening of the Holy Door, we see shots of a Papal High Mass, but there the appearance of the late Mgr. Respighi makes it clear that this is a flashback. The swearing-in of Swiss Guards and the grounds of Propaganda College and some of its students are interesting and unusual items in a film.

Holy Pilgrimage MCML is being shown in some cinemas in the provinces, but at the time of writing it has not been booked by the circuits nor has it been seen in London. And it has not the popular, elementary, undenominational appeal of the Wilfred Pickles' film. But many Catholics who know Rome might prefer it, for whereas Mr. Pickles is himself a visitor who conducts other pilgrims, Fr. Gannon is a host who welcomes them. The picture is a valuable contribution to the film record of the Holy Year. The measure of its success is the nostalgia which it induces.

H. A. C. C.

KIM

Starring: Errol Flynn, Dean Stockwell, Paul Lukas. **Director:** Victor Saville. An M.-G.-M. Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: C.* *Running time: 112 minutes.*

Those of an older generation who, like myself, have known (and maybe loved) "Kim" since boyhood days, cannot, I think, be quite happy about this film: in the transition from printed page to screen the magic of the book seems to have been lost. Obviously no effort has been spared: the film (or parts of it) was shot in India itself, the technicolour is admirable, the scenery magnificent, the acting of a very high standard. And yet it just hasn't got there.

Deviation from the Original

Compression is of course unavoidable, perhaps also on occasion deviation from the original story. But I cannot for the life of me imagine why the authors of the screen play should have found it necessary to kill off two of the most lovable characters, the Lama and Hurree Chunder, for apparently no reason whatever. Those who have read the book will remember how the Lama eventually finds his River of the Arrow, falls into it in a trance and is rescued by Hurree. The book concludes with the Lama announcing the great news to Kim: "He crossed his hands on his lap and smiled, as a man may who has won salvation for himself and his beloved." A fine ending, you will agree, and incidentally Kipling's; but it does not suit our authors, who make the Lama fall dead as he sees his long-sought river in a mirage. And having thus disposed of him they have invented a new ending in which Kim is left with Mahbub Ali on a horse, dangling a watch which Colonel Creighton has presented to him for services rendered. We are also left somewhat in doubt as to Kim's future: is he going to join his father's regiment (an idea he consistently abhorred) or take up the "Great Game", in other words join the Intelligence Service? There should be no sort of uncertainty on this point; surely the book's whole *raison d'être* is to demonstrate Kim's gradual training for the "Great Game". As to Hurree, he is only allowed two very brief appearances before he gets

THE AFFAIRS OF SALLY

Starring: Lucille Ball, Eddie Albert, with Carl Benton Reid, Gale Robbins. **Director:** Lloyd Bacon. A Columbia Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 85 minutes approx.*

This stunting running farce could have been very funny for about half an hour. The "shriekingly funny" has, it seems to me, to be short and snappy, for the mind just cannot be kept empty for 85 long minutes.

It may be that the sponsors of *The Affairs of Sally* could not synopsisise whatever story there is since there was no synopsis provided for the punctual critic. But the series of possibly over-prolonged stunt sequences show Lucille Ball as very well adapted for this type of comedy. There are two murders to keep the fun fast and furious.

X.

murdered half-way through the film. There are also other deviations from the story which seem to me unnecessary, but I will not enumerate them here: anyone sufficiently interested has only to read the book before or after seeing the film.

Much to Enjoy

I would like though to stress another point. Kipling (who after all should know) tells us that the Lama was "dressed in fold upon fold of dingy stuff like horse-blanketing and . . . on his head was a gigantic sort of tam-o'-shanter". This seems fairly clear, but the producer of the film has seen fit to dress him in a red cassock-like robe, surmounted by a kind of M.A. gown of the same colour, and a red hat, transforming him in fact into a Renaissance Doge. Why on earth?

All the same there is much to enjoy in this film. I have already mentioned the beauty of the scenery, the crowds of men and beasts on the Great Trunk Road are magnificent, if only we were given just a little more time to feast our eyes on such a medley of colour. The acting is, as I have said, of a high order. Errol Flynn gives one of his very best performances as Mahbub Ali, the red-bearded horse dealer and no inconsiderable personage in the "Great Game". The Lurgan Sahib of Arnold Moss is beyond praise. I liked Reginald Owen's Father Victor, and was thankful that the somewhat objectionable parson, Bennett, had been cut out. Paul Lukas' performance is beautiful, once one has become definitely reconciled to the fact that he is a Doge and not a Lama. Nevertheless, the incongruity of his producing a begging-bowl from the folds of such a costume has to be seen to be believed!

A Boy's Achievement

And what of Kim himself? It is not untrue to say that Dean Stockwell shoulders practically the entire burden of the film; that he does it with outstanding success is a great achievement for a boy. But somehow he is just not Kim; and yet who could adequately portray the Irish-born boy brought up as a Hindu gamín, with oriental cunning and Irish humour inextricably mixed? Certainly no boy film star that I have ever seen. Dean

Stockwell does his best, and a very good best at that, but he is too serious and earnest even when perpetrating his most mischievous pranks, and never really lets himself go. For one moment I hoped the humour was going to show up when he gave that gorgeous wink to the girl in the first few moments, but it was only a flash that never reappeared. This much must be said: but for all that, it is a fine performance which will greatly enhance this talented young actor's well-established reputation.

Don't on any account miss this film, but your enjoyment of it will vary according to both your knowledge and your love of Kipling.

T. C. F.

MURDER WITHOUT CRIME

Starring: Dennis Price, Derek Farr, Patricia Plunkett, Joan Dowling.
Producer: Victor Skutezky.
Director: J. Lee-Thompson.
Distributors: Associated British Pathé Ltd. *Certificate:* A.
Category: A.

I cannot say I liked this film. Too pretentious! Too self-conscious! Maybe, J. Lee-Thompson hitched his wagon too tightly to the Hitchcock star.

In the main it is about a fellow who thought he had murdered a girl from a night-club. It would be unfair to the film to say more. But may I ask why we have to endure such exhibitions of low living? Life is not all booze and adultery.

Low Characters

Hardly a decent character appears in this film. Dennis Price is a conceited, self-centred sadist who struts around and talks like a character from a play by a fellow who hasn't learnt how to write and with an accent very much like George Sanders. Joan Dowling is the voluptuous miss of the night club with a loose mouth and looser morals. Derek Farr is the writer chap who spends more time with the liquor bottle than with the ink bottle. He is a sap of a fellow and the cause of all the trouble. Patricia Plunkett is the gentle wife who forgives her husband seventy seven times. She cries a good deal and doesn't act too convincingly, I thought.

E.

THE LAST OF THE BUCCANEERS

Starring: Paul Henreid. **Director:** Lew Landers. A Columbia Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B.* *Running time: 79 minutes.*

Here is a real piratical picture. During its course at least two treasure ships are captured; an island, heavily defended by Red Indians, is stormed and taken; and eventually the same island is again stormed, this time by regular troops and the pirate settlement with all their loot destroyed.

That is really all there is to it. There are some lovely technicolor scenes by moonlight and the costumes of the period (1812) are a joy to the eye. Paul Henreid does all the suitable things expected of a pirate captain—he bullies his crew, hangs a rebel and makes love in off-moments. Karin Booth, as the aristocratic girl who loves him in spite of all, looks her part but fails entirely to act it. By far the best performance is that of Jack Oakie as Sergeant Dominick, the captain's fat and humorous second in command. It is all rather trash, but might serve for an afternoon's entertainment when you can't get in to a better film.

T. C. F.

THE MATING SEASON

Starring: Gene Tierney, John Lund, Miriam Hopkins, Thelma Ritter. **Producer:** Charles Brackett. **Director:** Mitchell Leisen. **Distributors:** Paramount. *Certificate: U. Category: B.*

There is always something comical about snobs, whether they are social snobs (of all stratas), intellectual snobs, spiritual snobs, bomb snobs (a type that came into being during the late war), art snobs or film snobs. Snobbery, automatically, lends itself to comedy. This comedy is well worth seeing, I think, for those who like a bit of clean debunking, for we see how ridiculous a middle class fellow can become when he marries a society girl, not *because* he marries a society girl, but *because* he hides from her his origins.

Val McNulty (John Lund) tells Maggie Carlton, the ambassador's daughter whom he marries, that there is only his mother who manages his

father's business in Jersey City! The joke of the whole thing, and from another point of view the tragedy of the whole thing, is that there was no need for Val to have hidden the truth that his mother ran a small hamburger joint. Maggie was bored with the artificiality of her own milieu and wanted to get away from silly little princes and foppish young men whom she had to meet.

Superb Artiste

When Maggie finds out the truth about Val's mother she rounds on him, not because his mother is not her sort, but because she thinks that Val is ashamed of his own mother, and she hates snobs. Their marriage is nearly wrecked.

This comedy is very much alive; the plot is well developed; all the characters are authentic and play well; one's interest is sustained all the time. The script is good, the humour is spontaneous. Gene Tierney always gives distinction to any part she plays; but many people will agree that in this comedy the laurels must go to Thelma Ritter. She is no glamour girl, but what a superb artiste!

E.

WATCH THE BIRDIE

Starring: Red Skelton, Arlene Dahl, Ann Miller and Leon Ames. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Director:** Jack Donohue. *Certificate: U. Category: A.* *Running time: 71 minutes.*

A slapstick comedy in which Red Skelton plays three rôles; son, father and grandfather, and is assisted by beautiful Arlene Dahl and gorgeous Ann Miller. As a dumb cameraman Red unintentionally exposes a plot to defraud the beautiful Arlene of her father's hard-won millions and incidentally exposes himself and the B.A. to a gory revenge at the hands of the thwarted villain, Leon Ames. Ann Miller is already sufficiently exposed, but evidently not enough to give the Censor any qualms. There are many funny moments and if you can endure Red Skelton's brand of suggestive leering and double entendre, you will quite like this.

V.

THE BREAKING POINT

Starring: John Garfield, Patricia Neal.

Producer: Jerry Wald. **Director:**

Michael Curtiz. **Distributors:**

Warner Bros. **Certificate:** A.

Category: B. **Running time:**

90 minutes.

Enjoyable Film

First class photography makes this Hemmingway story quite an enjoyable film. Its weakness chiefly lies in the time that has passed between the days of the great depression, which gave bite to the original novel and the security of the present which serves to lessen patience with the difficulties of Harry Morgan (John Garfield). The story concerns the efforts of a small boat owner to pay his way and the gradual drift through economic pressure to crime. A girl, Leona (Patricia Neal), does not make things any easier for Harry or his wife (Phyllis Thaxter) and there is an exciting and gory finish.

Glamour and Humour

Although Patricia Neal has all the glamour and excitement, Phyllis Thaxter manages to play the patient wife so well that the honours go to her. There is an air of reality about her portrayal which is lacking in John Garfield. In the main an enjoyable if undistinguished film.

J. C.



Scenes from the film



HELPERS WANTED

Once again we appeal for persons willing to help in menial but essential tasks connected with the administration of the C.F.I. Pressure of work has left us sadly behind with the Index for the 1950 Focus. Will someone with a typewriter, willing to sort out and type the indices for last year's volume of Focus, please give us their help?

THE LONG DARK HALL

Starring: Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer, with Denis O'Dea and Raymond Huntly. **Directors:** Anthony Bushell and Reginald Beck. **Distributors:** British Lion Film Corporation. **Certificate:** *A. Category: B. Running time:* 86 minutes.

A trial scene, whether on stage or screen is always effective, given the minimum of competence in writers and actors. Here we have a screenplay by Nunnally Johnson, by no means original but very well scripted and acting that is well above the average. The story concerns the trial and condemnation of an innocent man for murder on circumstantial evidence. He is shown to have had an affair with the murdered woman, but his wife believes in his love and his innocence and backs him loyally.

Rex Harrison, as the accused, gives a sensitive, and for him, unusually dramatic performance. Lilli Palmer, as his wife, also acts with great



Rex Harrison gives a sensitive and dramatic performance . . .

conviction and tenderness. Raymond Huntly, as a C.I.D. man, turns in a nicely rounded character study and Denis O'Dea again proves his skill in

PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Starring: James Mason, Ava Gardner, Nigel Patrick. **Producer and Director:** Albert Lewin. **Distributors:** Independent Films. **Certificate:** *A. Category: A. Running time:* 122 minutes.

This beautiful technicolor film possesses many attractive qualities, chiefly because its setting is in Spain with lovely shots of sea and sand to say nothing of the whole panoply of a superbly staged bullfight. In a story with a motif as familiar as this—the Wandering Jew, Death, takes a holiday theme—it was a mistake to use the flashback to start with. It is a pity that we are allowed to know from

the beginning that Pandora has sacrificed her young life on the altar of ghostly love. The old legend which forms the basis of this story is that of the 16th century Dutch sea captain who murdered his innocent young wife and was condemned to sail the seas for centuries until such time as a young girl should love him enough to die for him. It appears that the script writers decided to attempt the creation of an interesting film without any element of suspense. Pandora (Ava Gardner) plays the part of the reincarnated young wife and rises to the exigencies of the plot despite all the efforts of the Flying Dutchman to stop her. It is her misfortune that she was not allowed to keep us guessing but is, in more senses than one, dead from the initial stages of the film onwards.

giving full value to the words he speaks and the gestures he uses as the Prosecuting Counsel.

A group of small-part players provide a satisfactory frame to the picture. Among them ought to be mentioned Patricia Wayne as the murdered girl, Meriel Forbes as her friend and Brenda De Banzie as her landlady.

One always asks oneself whether people really would behave or speak as the characters on the screen do. While one has some doubt in the case of some of the dialogue in this film, a true note is struck in the condemned cell when the wife says that she will continue to pray and her husband answers that he does not think that prayer can do much good, but perhaps it comforts people to pray. There speaks the average nominal Christian who is only driven to his knees when adversity overtakes him. But out of this adversity, one feels that a better way of living will emerge and so the film turns out to be, as well as an exciting story of a man on trial for his life, also a parable on the need of supporting a good life in the material sense with something worthwhile in the spiritual sense.

Owing to a special twist in the



... Lilli Palmer acts with great conviction and tenderness ...

dénouement of this film it is advisable to see it the right way round; that is, from the beginning.

V.

A good supporting cast help James Mason to make a competent though not over-inspiring job of the Flying Dutchman, but it becomes increasingly obvious as the film proceeds that Ava Gardner has been seriously mis-cast. Although she is intended to be, not only the reincarnated young wife, but a Helen of Troy type as well, and we see several men risk their lives and even die for thwarted love of her, it never becomes easy to think any of these even remotely possible. In an endeavour to create a somewhat fey atmosphere about her, the Director has made Miss Gardner essay statuesque immobility—a pose which she quite clearly finds uncomfortable. The main difficulty, however, lies beyond the power of good direction because her personality is too limited for the part.

We are left wondering how this girl from Cincinnati or some such place got into this ritzy situation, and most of the time Miss Gardner appears to share our problem. It is Spain and the Spaniards who save the picture, a fact which raises the question why film companies have never thought of going there before.

J. C.

Overheard outside "Samson and Delilah"

"You'll see 'im cutting 'er 'air."

"Isn't it 'er that cuts 'is 'air?"

"Oh, is that it? And doesn't she 'ave 'is 'ead on a charger?"

711 OCEAN DRIVE

Starring: Edmond O'Brien and Joanne Dru. **Producer:** Frank N. Seltzer. **Director:** Joseph H. Newman. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

Now we know what happens when we put a dollar either way on the 2-30, or at least we are a bit nearer knowing some of the intricacies that lie behind the simple bet. The mysteries of the art of book-making are a closed book to all but the bookies, and whereas theirs is an honourable calling over here, in the States it is forbidden by law and so it becomes both more alluring and more lurid. In this film we see what happens, or some of what happens, in the underground world of American betting, and also what can happen to a decent fellow (he is a decent fellow, because we see him give some of his wages away to someone in need, at the beginning of the film)—yes, we see what can happen to a decent fellow who gets into the business and gets on in it. He becomes a very rotten sort of fellow indeed. From all this, I suppose, we are intended to be induced to divert our fortunes and our spare shillings (if any) from the clutches of bookies to more worthy objects. It should be a lesson to us all, but one not to be taken too much to heart. (By the way, have you a winner for the Derby?)

At least all this is said to the tune of a story—a story which, if it does not make us jump out of our seats, will keep us firmly rooted in them to the end of the film. We would have preferred a crisper dialogue seasoned with wit, and we would have liked some subtlety in the characters.

Futile Chase

Finally we have a chase—a rather common fifth act to a film nowadays, and a useful tip for us to knock out our pipes and to button up our coats to prepare for our exit. This time the chase is not through the labyrinthine sewers of Vienna, or over the mountainous frontier of a police state, or over the roofs of Liverpool warehouses, but through the ramifications of an immense dam. Down lifts,

through tunnels, along generators, and up stairs. Yet this did not thrill us as it might have done and was intended to do. Was it because we have seen this sort of thing once too often, or—and I think this is the case—because we had no real interest or concern for the pursued?

G.

THE FLAME AND THE ARROW

Starring: Burt Lancaster and Virginia Mayo, with Robert Douglas, Frank Allenby and Nick Cravat. **Director:** Jacques Tourneur. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 79 minutes.

Why are we told at the beginning of this film that it portrays twelfth-century Italy? It would be just as simple to say "in the Olden Days", and one would not be distracted by the thought that here are Franciscans a century before they were founded; here is the long-bow, more premature still; all these peasants can read and write . . . and so on. Of course, it couldn't matter less, because no one expects historical accuracy in this kind of film. One merely hopes to be entertained. One is.

Acrobatics

In this film then you have Burt Lancaster as Dardo the Arrow, holding out in the mountains against Ulrich of Hesse, the German conqueror of Lombardy. Ulrich wins two rounds by capturing, first Dardo's wife and then his little son, Rudi. In revenge Dardo seizes the Princess Anne, who turns out to be Virginia Mayo. She looks very attractive and unperturbed with a chain round her neck and the camera dawdles rather unnecessarily while she washes her legs. To let you into a secret, Dardo wins in the end: but not before he has (apparently) been hanged and his "corpse" disposed of. During his second lease of life he performs the most delightfully impossible acrobatics with his customary gay unconcern. But his triumph is mainly due to the fact that Ulrich's troops behave like rather badly-constructed robots. Thus nothing could be easier than for Dardo,

brandishing a flambeau, to hold at bay a score of soldiers armed with immensely long pikes. Finally Ulrich, trying unsuccessfully to shelter behind little Rudi, is shot neatly in the throat (Dardo being, as you will have guessed, the best bowman in all Italy).

Well, it is all great fun. If you like a combination of pantomime and circus in a pseudo-medieval setting, here you are. You will be thrilled by Burt Lancaster's breathless feats. You will love poor dumb Piccolo (a very able performance by Nick Cravat). And I hope you will enjoy yourself as much as I did.

J. R. W. D.

THE FRANCHISE AFFAIR

Starring: Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray. **Producer:** Robert Hall. **Director:** Lawrence Huntington. **Distributors:** Associated British Pathé, Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A.

For the filmgoer best known to me an English film about English or, if you prefer, British people would have to be very poor not to please. *The Franchise Affair* can make no claim to being a great or even a highly workmanlike production, yet in its leisurely way it sustains interest.

Robert Blair (Michael Denison) is a pleasant young lawyer in a small country town. He is called in to help and advise Marion Sharpe (Dulcie Gray) and her mother (Marjorie Fielding) who are being interrogated by the police. The trouble is that a circumstantial tale of the kidnapping, detention and maltreatment of a certain sixteen-year-old Betty Kane (Ann Stephens) inculcates them, for they and their house, the Franchise, answer perfectly the girl's description. The film proceeds to the clearing of the two women through the unremitting efforts of Blair. He defends them first against the violence of public hostility and prepares their defence for the court of law.

Plenty of Character Stuff

I just refuse to believe that the granite faced Mrs. Sharpe (a masterly performance by Marjorie Fielding) could ever have run a boarding house—too grand, too unaccommodating.

And there were other instances in which I thought the differences of social habit were rather blurred. This could likely enough be deliberate for none of us now admire the way Mr. Punch used to find some something inevitably comic in the speech, dress or social habits of all outside the purely professional classes.

However, there is plenty of what is known as character stuff, and the 28 named cast include English actors who are well able to take their opportunities of giving their individual expert study of type without loss to the value of their work as a team.

I see no harm in this film, and it does ram home the wickedness of gossip and the injustice and brutality possible when an undiscerning public opinion is mobilised against individuals.

X.

TRANSCONTINENT EXPRESS

Starring: Locomotive 81, Forrest Tucker, Adele Mara, Adrian Booth and Bruce Cabot. **Associate Producer:** Paul Malvern. **Director:** Joseph Kane. **Distributors:** Republic Pictures. International Inc. In Trucolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

Yes, the principal star of this film is the engine, a quite genuine period piece. Apart from that, the film follows a familiar pattern. The railroad pioneers press on westwards despite difficulties of all kinds—especially the obstacle of human opposition. The latter comes mainly from Kirby Morrow (Bruce Cabot), an unpleasant type, who is not unnaturally annoyed that his fiancée Constance (Adele Mara) has left him for railway constructor Reed Loomis (Forrest Tucker). There are labour disputes, a boat is set on fire to drift against a vital bridge, and as usual the Indians are enlisted; but in vain, for Reed finally triumphs. Threats of derailment need not terrify the audience if they remember that the locomotive is a museum piece loaned for the film and is not likely to be risked.

The best acting in this film is that of Adrian Booth as Aleeta, the Indian

chief's daughter who has lived in Paris. Her performance was outstanding and one hopes to see more of her in the future.

The new colour process used for this film, Trucolor, is perhaps slightly more convincing than Technicolor. I understand that it is still in an early stage of development.

J. R. W. D.

THE DARK MAN

Starring: Edward Underdown, Maxwell Reed, Natasha Parry, William Hartnell, Barbara Murray. **Producer:** Julian Wintle. **Distributors:** G. F. D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 91 minutes.

The Dark Man (Maxwell Reed) murders a black marketeer and a taxi driver. A pretty actress from "the rep" in Walsham Bay and a handsome 'tec become involved. The detective (Edward Underdown) does as much love making with the girl from the rep (Natasha Parry) as crime-chasing; but if love is necessary to make the wheels of even a detective-story keep turning, I have no right to make further comment.

This is good entertainment, even with its obvious gaps; a pity though that more care was not taken with the direction; it could have been a first class thriller. The camera work is excellent. The script is good. The acting is rather poor. Apart from William Hartnell the minor characters play better than the major ones.

E.

BLACKMAILED

Starring: Mai Zetterling, Dirk Bogarde, Fay Compton, Robert Fleming, Michael Gough and Joan Rice. An H. H. Independent Production. **Director:** Marc Allegret. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

Fay Compton is the link connecting the other characters in this inverted thriller in which the blackmailer is killed early on in the film. The result is not the automatic freedom of the

victims, but rather their entanglement in a further skein of intrigue which causes the death of one and the unhappiness of others. Thus, Fay Compton, who had killed the blackmailer in order to release several people for whom she felt sorry is able to say that "Good cannot come out of evil" and so point a moral lesson.

However, there is some muddled morality in the rest of the film. For example, Mai Zetterling, who had contemplated running off with Robert Fleming, says she "no longer has the right" to do so when she finds that her invalid husband really cares for her. And Dirk Bogarde, who is living with an escaped Reformatory girl, thinks that it is excusable all the while he is a deserter, unable to get his papers rectified. Dirk also screams hysterically to the detective come to arrest him: "Don't make me use it!" when pointing a loaded revolver at the policeman. Still, there is no attempt to justify such conduct and it may well be regarded as a commentary on the un-Christian civilisation which is now so much taken for granted.

The film is, all things considered, a satisfactory piece of entertainment. Within obvious limits of scripting and dialogue, the actors do their best. Fay Compton gives the most complete performance. Mai Zetterling and Dirk Bogarde repeat characterisations fashioned in previous stage parts. Robert Fleming brings some conviction to his rôle as a doctor, but it is Michael Gough, as a peevish invalid, who makes one feel that he might be real. I found myself asking: "Do people really behave or speak like this in every day life?" To which echo only answers: "Do they!" Joan Rice who is "introduced" in this film, played the reformatory girl for all she was worth; namely, a two-year contract from Mr. Rank, but she was handicapped by a Chelsea-cum-Bloomsbury jargon which made one wonder whether her delinquency was failure to qualify at the R.A.D.A.

Another fetish which, for me, marred a not unpleasing film, were the bursts of melodramatic noise from the orchestra every time something obviously suspenseful was about to happen. This sort of thing is unnecessary in an adult story.

V.

THE MAN WHO CHEATED HIMSELF

Starring: Lee J. Cobb, Jane Wyatt, John Dall. **Producer:** Jack M. Warner. **Director:** Felix Feist. Presented by 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 81 minutes.

This is Jack M. Warner's first independent production. It is a creditable, in fact, distinguished beginning.

There is nothing remarkable about the story. It concerns the familiar theme of a man, who as a detective, has to solve a case of apparent murder in which he himself is involved. His predicament is made more difficult by highly intelligent co-operation provided by his younger brother.

The element of suspense is very well handled. Indeed the whole production indicates care and thought. Perhaps there is slight question of mis-casting, but not of any great moment. The end could have done with a little more definition. Your hearing and intelligence have to be good to catch the full irony of the situation. I didn't till I read the brochure afterwards. Whether it was my hearing or my intelligence that was at fault I leave to the charitable judgment of my readers.

It is not a film of importance, but none the less is warmly recommended.

T.

BATTLE OF POWDER RIVER

Starring: Van Heflin, Yvonne De Carlo, Preston Foster, Jack Oakie. **Producer:** Leonard Goldstein. **Director:** George Sherman. **Distributors:** G.F.D. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 82 minutes.

For those in search of Westerns this is a good one . . . good entertainment and good history, with colour, vitality and movement in a land of enchanting landscapes and sky-scapes.

The time is the second half of the nineteenth century, in America, when there were so many bloody skirmishes between the Yanks and the Indians. The story is about the great Sioux

Indian uprising. We are witnesses of a pitched battle between the redskins led by Red Cloud (John War Eagle), a formidable dignified personality, and the white skins led by Colonel Carrington, who is commanding the fort on the Powder River. The Americans use powder and the Indians use bows and arrows, and are, of course, decimated.

There is a very good performance by Van Heflin, who is in sympathy with the Indians and their fundamental honour. Jack Oakie fits neatly into the picture to provide the light relief. Yvonne, who doesn't fit quite so neatly into the picture, is there, I presume, to provide the romantic relief.

E.

LOVE THAT BRUTE

Starring: Paul Douglas, Jean Peters, with Cesar Romero, Keenan Wynn and Joan Davis. **Director:** Alexander Hall. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 85 minutes.

The projectionist, waiting to screen this epic, whiled away the time, during which the other critics, less noble than myself, got from one theatre to another, by playing a "number" called "Let's Go To The Pictures"! This devastatingly original tune has been devised in an attempt to wheedle back to the box-office, those screen-sickened millions who now find something better to do. It will need something more vital and, I hope, more decent, than this sickly skit on Chicago's gangster heydays. Humour is a strictly personal taste, but I imagine that most will be nauseated by this story of a soft-hearted gangster who, instead of killing his rivals, keeps them comfortably imprisoned in a basement. When eventually they escape, he is "taken for a ride", spared by two of his grateful "victims", buried by proxy in a funeral ceremony which is an offensive travesty, and sees his rival arrested to be executed for the only crime he did not commit.

There is humour that is vulgar and humour that is tasteless. Where one is forced to make a choice I prefer the former. This film belongs to the latter category.

V.

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Starring: Charles Laughton, with Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Thomas Mitchell, Maureen O'Hara, and Edmond O'Brien. An R.K.O. Radio Picture. **Director:** William Dieterle. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 116 minutes.

This film, made in 1939, is an excellent example by which to estimate the deterioration of some well-known names since the early days of the war. Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara both provide some unforgettable moments in this film, moments which they have not come near repeating since. The crowd scenes in front of the reconstructed Cathedral of Notre Dame remind us of some of the much-praised Russian crowd effects.

The story, after Victor Hugo, has been considerably bowdlerised, in order, presumably, to satisfy censorship requirements in the U.S.A. As we have it now, it tells of the devotion of the Hunchback Quasimodo for the gypsy-girl, Esmerelda, and of the efforts of Frollo, the High Justice (well-played by Cedric Hardwicke), to have her burnt to death since she will not minister to his passions. His brother, the Archbishop (Walter Hampden), makes feeble attempts to restrain Frollo and only succeeds in arousing the animosity of the King of Beggars (boisterously characterised by Thomas Mitchell), who leads his gang of cut-throats against the Cathedral. The scene in which the hunchback repels them with boiling oil and thunderbolts of stone is photographically very impressive.

Laughton's make-up as Quasimodo is revoltingly ugly, but he manages to inspire pity both in his audience and in the heart of Maureen O'Hara. The scene in which she brings him a cup of water when he is being tormented on the public pillory is a fine piece of dumb acting. The only thing left to Laughton with which to express emotion is one eye. By means of this, and the general motion of his misshapen body, he suggests a world

of feeling. If only he still were able or were allowed to give us this class of acting.

The film has obvious faults of romantic exaggeration and theatrical over-acting and it has some brutal moments which make it unsuitable for sensitive children, but it is well worth looking at for the sake of Charles Laughton in the days of his prime.

V.

GROUNDS FOR MARRIAGE

Starring: Van Johnson, Kathryn Grayson, with Paula Raymond, Barry Sullivan, Lewis Stone and Reginald Owen. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Director:** Robert Z. Leonard. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 85 minutes approx.

This film seems to have been devised to give Van Johnson fans who are, I gather, mainly of the other sex, ample opportunity to see their dream boy in every kind of usual and unusual situation. They can see him dressing, shaving, having his feet washed in a mustard bath, using a stethoscope, singing in opera, dancing boogie-woogie, giving a lecture (an admirably played burlesque of the popular medico, this), playing serious music on an oboe in an orchestra, etc., etc.

The story concerns the efforts of his divorced wife (Kathryn Grayson) to win him back from his proposed second attempt (Paula Raymond). Our American friends have down-graded the film on the grounds that it reflects the acceptability of divorce. It seems to us also to reflect the absurdity of those who allow their lives to be moulded to such a frivolous pattern that they can enter into and depart from the serious business of marriage motivated in both cases by musical incompatibility.

There are some interesting musical excerpts in the film (since Kathryn Grayson is a pleasing operatic soprano) and Van Johnson brings some unsuspected vocal efforts (dubbed of course) to an extract from Carmen!

V.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

SUNDAY IN AUGUST

(Domenica d'Agosto)

Starring: Anna Baldini, Franco Interlenghi. **Producer:** Sergio Amidei.
Director: Luciano Emmer.
Distributors: Film Traders.
 Italian dialogue, with English subtitles. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

When my colleague V. heard that I had not only bathed at Ostia, but also used a washstand just like the ramshackle contraption the basin of which has such a part to play near the end of the film, he surrendered this review to me with characteristic generosity.

Artistic Realism

Rarely has my thirst for artistic realism been slaked so satisfactorily. This picture disproves the contention of second-rate producers that if a film is like real life it can only be dull. In fact it is least interesting when it yields to the temptation to desert the genius of its own pattern to attempt pseudo-excitement in the cliché of a robbery with shooting. Otherwise it is content to take the ordinary events of a typical August Sunday, mostly at Ostia-Lido but partly in Rome, and present them without too much anxiety about continuity.

Here is the art which relies not on far-fetched imagination nor on the creation of extraordinary situations but on acute observation, memory, selection, arrangement and unself-conscious re-enactment. To speak of local colour would hardly give the right impression, for the lido at Ostia is like many another Mediterranean bathing beach and the views of Rome are few and far between. If popular meant characteristic of people and typical meant concerned with types, those would be the adjectives to use. The vociferous working class family packed in a vehicle, the marked affection of a father for his child, the definite and not too attractive ethos of Italian

youths *en bloc*, the unabashed and protracted staring of a middle-aged man at the physical attractions of a passing woman, even the unconcern with animal suffering which can leave cattle penned without any shade in the courtyard of the *mattatoio* throughout a blazing Sunday—these and similar touches of authenticity combine to make a remarkable film which those who know Italy will certainly appreciate.

The film critic of the *Times* aptly pointed out the absence of something no less typical of a Roman Sunday, the churches and the people going into them. We hear that the inmates of the workhouse are going to Vespers, though I should have thought that Vespers for the laity was less characteristic of Italy than of France, and the boy who always slept late on Sunday had obviously *not* been to Mass. It may perhaps be that such a total of reference to Sunday worship is tendentious, and those who are familiar with the Continental Sunday might wish for a more balanced portrait for export to this country. But the Italians who made this picture are so good-natured about their own national foibles that I haven't the heart to wag too solemn a finger at them. And I like the trend away from that pessimism so apparent in a number of recent Italian films.

Q.

CESAR

Starring: Raimu, Pierre Fresnay, Charpin, Orane Demazis and Andre Fouché. **Producer and Director:** Marcel Pagnol.
Distributors: G. C. T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 120 minutes.

The third of the trilogy of films which helped to gain Marcel Pagnol his election to the Académie Française for his services to the art of cinema, maintains the high standard of acting and Gallic wit which distinguished

Marius and Fanny. The situations and dialogue, it is true, occasionally impinge on the scurrilous and the improper in a way that gives us pause in praising this film but, as we have mentioned before, French films of this type have at least the merit that they recognise immorality for what it is and do not attempt to disguise it under a camouflage of scientific-psychological jargon. In any case, compared with the subtly-presented superior sex-appeal of the average De Mille epic, which manages to by-pass the censors by lip-service to respectability, most French films of this kind are singularly innocuous.

Raimu is Faultless

With *Cesar*, the story of the Marseillais quayside family is brought to a conclusion with the reunion of Marius and Fanny, after the death of Panisse, whom she had married at the instigation of her mother and Cesar. Her son, now 20 years of age, discovers that Marius is, in fact, his father, and his logical analysis of the situation brings them to see that though they have made a muddle of their lives hitherto, there is no sense or virtue in not putting things right, even at this late stage.

The film brims with those humorous Marseillais touches which made the other two films memorable. So, the arguments whether alcohol can truly be said to be the enemy of a liver which it has never encountered; the decision that any man who fails to kick a bowler hat left enticingly lying on the pavement must be a Lyonnaise (the fact that a large stone is concealed under the hat gives point to the "game"); the struggle between hatless respect to the dead at the funeral of Panisse and the desire to save bald heads from the ravages of the fierce Marseilles sun: the sublime absurdity of the situation where Marius pleads for the restoration of his parental rights—and so on.

The acting of Raimu as Cesar is faultless. His every gesture and intonation is in keeping with the sly character he is presenting. Pierre Fresnay has a larger share of the limelight than in *Fanny* and acts with extraordinary charm. Orane Demazis is better suited to the middle-aged Fanny of this film than she was as the

young girl in the second of the series. Each player is carefully fitted to the whole picture and for those whose choice of film is based on a liking for adult fare with intelligent French salting, *Cesar* is worth viewing.

It should be pointed out that it is unlikely to prove entertaining to those who want the film to do all the work for them.

V.

CENERENTOLA (Cinderella)

From the Opera by Rossini, with
Lori Randi, Gino Del Signore,
and Affro Poli. **Director:**
Fernando Cerchio. **Distributors:**
Archway Film Distributors.
Certificate: U. Category: B.

One of the great virtues of the cinema is that it is so realistic. The camera can turn from the scene of a great cavalry charge to the examination of minute detail as seen through a microscope. We have come to expect the film to be real and one of the few exceptions is in the field of cartoon. Recently Disney has given us his interpretation in cartoon of the old fairy story of Cinderella and now an Italian company has endeavoured to present the story again through the opera of Rossini. Perhaps the greatest objection that could be levelled against previous attempts at filming opera is that on the screen they appear so incredible. We have now been used to seeing real-life characters express themselves in song. The allowances we make in the opera-house are altogether different to those we are used to making in the cinema. In the present case, however, this difficulty is not so noticeable, for the fact that we are seeing only a fairy tale makes us prepared to grant that same willing suspension of disbelief that we make so automatically for the stage or the opera. The fantastic nature of the theme gives Rossini's opera a great advantage over such more or less realistic operas as *Carmen*. Technical ingenuity enables Alidoro, the fairy-godfather of the refurbished tale, to indulge his magical abilities with the greatest of ease. He can vanish a coach with a flick of his wrist and create a storm by the lift of an eyebrow.

The story is played out with a grace of movement well fitting the elegant setting. The film was shot in the Royal Palace at Turin, which provides just the right atmosphere. Rossini's score needs no recommendation and the singing throughout was most pleasing. The sub-titles are few and the film is allowed to speak for itself through the actions of the characters and the emotional content of the score. The camera has been used with discrimination to light up and emphasise the important parts of the story.

In our usual demand on a film this one is far from being perfect, but of its kind, it is pleasantly effective. It should prove of particular value to those whose knowledge of opera is largely restricted to broadcasts and gramophone recordings.

PAT DOWNEY.

THE PARIS WALTZ

(Valse de Paris)

Starring: Yvonne Printemps and Pierre Fresnay. **Director:** Marcel Archard. **Distributors:** Films de France. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

This apocryphal "biography" of Jacques Offenbach, the French-Jewish composer who contributed more than 70 light operas to the Parisians of the mid-nineteenth century, is a good example of a naughty story that is nicely told. Offenbach's patronage of the young singer, Hortense Schneider, and the series of amorous affairs after each of which she comes tripping back to her music master, are rendered innocuous by reason of the lightness of the touch and the music which accompanies them.

Pierre Fresnay is given the opportunity for an amusing masquerade as Offenbach and Yvonne Printemps is almost miraculously youthful and charming as Hortense. Incidentally, she sings beautifully and manages at the same time to look natural: a rare achievement on the screen.

This is a film which only adults of perception are likely fully to enjoy.

V.

THE WANTON (Maneges)

Starring: Simone Signoret and Bernard Blier. **Director:** Yves Allegret. **Distributors:** Films de France. **Certificate:** X **Category:** A. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

This French film is released with the new X certificate but, apart from some unnecessarily intimate and prolonged osculation there is little but sophistication to attract the morbid cinema-goer who thinks the new certificate is going to provide him with thrills.

It is quite clear that it is unsuitable for adolescents, but whether it is of any use to adults is also a point to be considered. It is the story of a gold-digging woman who, when she finds that her husband's business is failing, callously seeks other sources of supply. In this she is aided and abetted by her worthless mother. She finds that she has fallen for a man as unscrupulous as herself. She meets with an accident from which she emerges paralysed for life. Her husband then departs leaving her to her mother to be cared for.

As a film it is undistinguished. There is much too much dialogue. The characters talk incessantly. The photography is largely cast in that underlighted tone which seems now to have become fashionable. But one needs more than shadows on stairways to maintain contact with a film. The stars do not add to their reputation but there is an impressive performance by Jane Marken as the vicious mother.

V.

Pilgrimage to Fatima

The Book of the Film may
be had from

THE BLUE COTTAGE,
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S.W.7. Price 2s. 6d.

From Our Educational Panel

BIOLOGY FILM STRIPS AND FILMS

LIBRARIES

Army Kinema Corporation, 36 Dover Street, London, W.1.

British Instructional Films, Pathé, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.

Common Ground, Sydney Place, London, S.W.7.

G.B.I. Film Library, Aintree Road, Perivale, Middx.

FILM STRIPS

Badger

Common Ground, 504. By Ernest Neal. 32 frames. Price : 15s.

Those who are interested in Natural History, whether adults or children, will love this film strip. The photography is excellent and the subdivision of the material into five sections each introduced by a suitable caption, makes it easier to follow.

Having seen the Badger in its natural environment, we are shown the best way of obtaining a view of this very shy, nocturnal creature. This section includes some delightful photographs of a family of badgers at play. In the third section, after a presentation of the much debated problem, whether badgers are useful or harmful, the life-history is summarised in a series of 9 frames, concluding with a useful diagram of the annual cycle.

The last section has a practical interest especially for rural schools. It deals with the topic of how to find badgers and the various suggestions put forward are well illustrated. The method of looking for foot-prints and learning to distinguish them from those of other small mammals, would appeal to ardent young naturalists and be well within their scope.

Suitability: Secondary Modern or Grammar Schools; child 12 plus. School Natural History Societies.

Woodland Plants

Common Ground, 378. By R. H. Hall. Price : 15s.

Biology teachers who are interested in field work will welcome this useful film strip. It deals in turn with all the commonest types of British woodland, but the two Oakwood types, viz., the Pedunculate and Sessile, are treated in much greater detail than the others. For these, the pre-vernal, vernal and summer aspects are each considered, and the characteristic layering is emphasised. For each layer the dominant plants are shown, together with their common associates. The photography is good and clear and the teaching notes are a great help in using the strip to the best advantage.

Suitability: Secondary Modern and Grammar Schools; children 14-18 years.

Care of Livestock

Common Ground, 467. Price : 15s.

This film strip is intended to be used in conjunction with one entitled *The Stockman* which has a section devoted to the rules which must be observed in the feeding of livestock.

The three sections of the film deal respectively with the following topics:

1. The different groups of food, e.g., bulky, fibrous and succulent, concentrated and complete foods.
2. The constituents of these foods—proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, etc., and their importance to animals.
3. The factors which decide the requirements of the animal.

The film has been made in collaboration with the Film Strip Advisory Panel of the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs and this accounts for its rather technical character and determines its suitability.

From the point of view of Biology teaching in schools it is not directly

useful, although, as the authors suggest, it might be used in conjunction with some of the other film strips which have been produced, e.g., *Feeding and Digestion in Mammals* (see *Focus*, February 1949) to show the application of scientific principles in the feeding of farm animals.

FILMS

"SECRETS OF NATURE" Series.
British Instructional Films Ltd.
Hiring charges: 7s. 6d. sound;
5s. 6d. silent.

The Nightingale

1 reel, sound.

This is an attractive film showing the habits of the Nightingale. Some of the photography is excellent, particularly the shots of the nest with the fledglings clamouring for food. In the general woodland scenes, introduced, one imagines, just to give background to the film, it is less clear. The subject matter is simple and quite suitable for juniors. Captions accompany some parts of the commentary and make it still easier for young children to follow.

Suitability: Nature Study; children 9-15.

Summertime Meadow

1 reel, sound.

As the name seems to suggest, this film is full of sunshine and beauty. The material is necessarily selective but nevertheless we are introduced to a good variety of the plant and animal inhabitants of the meadow. We see in "close-ups" the pollination of several flowers and are fascinated by the movement of a millipede! We see the Burnet moth and that beautiful creature, the swallow tail butterfly. We watch the caterpillar making its chrysalis and later, emerging from it. There is a great deal of information in the film and sufficient material to illustrate several lessons. With young children it could be used to inspire interest in the wonders of life; with older children it would be useful as an introduction to ecological work. To get the full value from this very attractive film, some careful preparation should precede the showing of it.

Suitability: Secondary Modern or Grammar School, 11-16.

The Glow Worm

1 reel, sound.

It is not easy to observe all the habits of the glow worm and this film enables one to see things which one reads about but which few are fortunate enough to see actually taking place. The photography is very good. The predatory habits of this peculiar little creature are well shown. The female is seen pursuing a snail, anaesthetising it by an injection behind the head, and then slowly sucking the nutritive matter from its unfortunate victim.

The film contains other interesting material and could be used for different purposes with children of various ages.

Suitability: Secondary Modern and Grammar Schools; 11 plus to 16.

Some Plants with Abnormal Methods of Nutrition

1 reel, sound.

This is not just a Nature Study Film but is useful for the more formal teaching of Biology. Only three plants are selected, viz., the Sundew, the Mushroom and Dodder, but they are treated in considerable detail and much of the information given is applicable to other plants of the same biological types. Thus the characteristics of parasitic flowering plants in general are well represented by the selected example—Dodder—and so of British insectivorous plants and saprophytic fungi of the larger variety. In the case of the latter, it is a pity that the emphasis is rather on structure and life-history than on nutrition, but for the other examples both aspects are fairly treated.

The germination of Dodder is beautifully shown and would serve as a useful illustration of plant movement.

Suitability: School Certificate Class in Grammar or Secondary Modern School.

Flowerless Plants

1 reel, sound.

The structure and life history of Mosses and Ferns are dealt with in this film and an attempt is made to explain "Alternation of Generations".

There is some beautiful micro-photography but on the whole the presentation is too difficult for children below the age of 16. It would certainly

be useful for Vith Form Biology, at least for introductory work, but if intended for this type of work it seems a pity that both Pteridophytes and Bryophytes are treated together. A more detailed study of one of these groups would be more useful.

Suitability: Grammar School; 16 plus.

The Nasturtium

1 reel, sound.

This is a general study of the life cycle of a plant from seed to seed. The photography is good and the commentary simple and clear. Animated diagrams are used to show the entry of water and salts into the root hairs and their passage through the plant, and also to show the processes of pollination and fertilisation. Speeded up photography gives a clear notion of some aspects of plant growth. The film is especially useful as giving a connected picture of the various activities of the plant and would be good for revision purposes.

Suitability: Secondary Modern and Grammar Schools; 14 plus.

Garden Tools

A Ministry of Information Film. Distributors: Army Kinema Corporation. 1 reel sound. No charge.

In schools where gardening is taught this film would be useful both to children and teachers. It shows first of all the tools which are essential to the young gardener and emphasises the points to be noted when buying new tools. The same tools are then shown actually in use and the correct way of handling them is demonstrated.

The film would be dull for those who have no interest in gardening, but for the keen amateur it would be quite engrossing and most useful.

Suitability: Amateur Gardeners, all ages.

Introduction to the Frog

G.B.I. F.1000. Sound, 2 reels. Hiring charge: 15s.

This film forms an introduction to the study of the frog by means of very skilful photography, employing such technical devices as slow motion and under-water photography, as well as animated diagrams. Early shots show the frog in its natural surroundings, followed by a rather disproportionately lengthy and detailed description of mating and spawning, and a brief account of the development of the tadpole and young frog.

All those pictures which show the frog in its natural home and especially those concerned with the way in which the animal moves are very good indeed and would prove most useful. . . . Those parts of the film concerned with the development of the fertilised egg, the movement of blood corpuscles, and the movement of pigment in cells although aided by a clear commentary would be much more valuable if an attempt were made to bring home to the viewer the very great magnification in size.

The purpose of the film is not quite clear. It is too advanced for young children, yet the commentary talks down to them. It would perhaps be best suited to pupils in Secondary Modern and lower forms of Secondary Grammar Schools.

ITEM OF INTEREST

Siobhan McKenna, Irish actress and film star, has translated Shaw's St. Joan into Gaelic (Irish). She accomplished this task in the space of three weeks, working from midnight till 5 a.m. She then produced it in the Taibhdherc, the Irish theatre in Galway and it was the first time in the history of this theatre that the house was sold out. People came from all parts of the west of Ireland to see

Siobhan play St. Joan. Among those present on the first night was the President of Eire, Sean T. O'Kelly.

After the Galway success, Siobhan took the play to the Abbey in Dublin where, the critics say, it made history. This young Irish actress has translated and produced this play of Shaw with that seeming effortless which is typical of her genius.

Cover

Personality

Dirk Bogarde

During one of my visits to Pinewood Studios some years ago, I found the publicity people in charge of Wessex Films very excited about a young man who was playing his first film rôle with them. I had gone to talk to Kathleen Ryan and Cyril Cusack, but found them, also, enthusiastic about the dark young man who was sharing the acting honours with them in *Esther Waters*. Alas, *Esther* was not a good film, mainly because the rambling George Moore novel had not submitted easily to the restrictions of film scripting, but at least it showed that Dirk Bogarde, though badly miscast and required to portray a variety of age changes beyond his powers, was a young man worth watching on the screen.

His next film, made with the same company, was *Once A Jolly Swagman* and here he began to show something of the individuality which has recently marked his better performances. As the young Cockney who becomes a champion dirt track rider, he brought considerable powers of observation and sentiment to bear upon the part.

He had, while in the armed forces during the war, displayed great skill in drawing and painting. He had acted as art critic for one of the London dailies and had sometimes said that he would have liked to follow a career as artist. This perceptive, cultural side of his nature, helped in the shaping of his next film part, which was as the young pianist in "*Alien Corn*", in Somerset Maugham's *Quartet*. It was altogether

a change from his previous rôles, a quiet, sensitive, more restrained part which, somehow, seemed to suit him. It was much more akin to the quiet, well-read, scholarly young man with whom I had chatted in the studio.

His next film role, however, though a change from the boisterous Cockney types, was only a change to a boisterous public-school type in *Dear Mr. Prohack*. It added to his reputation for versatility without earning him any distinctive acting honours.

Then followed what is perhaps, his best-known screen rôle, that of the young thug in *The Blue Lamp*. Here was a part, a loud Cockney part again, it is true, but one in which he was able to develop a more rounded character and into which he put a great amount of energy and thought. His gentle, cultured pianist had quite disappeared and we had only the cheap, self-assured, essentially vulgar type which peoples the London police-courts on charges of robbery with assault.

Another opportunity for a defined character was given him in the Borstal story *Boys In Brown* in which he portrayed and convincingly built up the unpleasant Welsh lad who sadistically batters on the miseries of his less intelligent companions.

Dirk Bogarde took the opportunity of a longish spell on the stage during which he played in repertory at the Bedford, Camden Town, and successfully essayed many varying rôles. His recent appearances in the West End with Mai Zetterling in *Point of Departure* have definitely added both to his powers as an actor and to his reputation as a man willing to work hard at his chosen craft.

He has another sensitive rôle as an artistically thwarted deserter in *Blackmailed*. This he plays with a kind of 'desperate earnestness which, perhaps, comes nearest to the kind of rôle which suits him best. He is capable of much better work than he has so far, been given. He evidently has the ability and also the industry to give the screen something really of outstanding quality. One envisages him as a mixture of Gerard Philipe and Jean Gabin. I wonder if British films will ever give him the chance to show what he really could do?

JOHN VINCENT.

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2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

APRIL 1951

No. 4

A MODERN NEED

While some Christians continue to keep alive the fallacy that the cinema is merely a form of entertainment and is outside the province of religion, the enemies of religion are busy making anti-Christian films. Russia has just made five anti-Christian films. How obedient she is to the shade of Lenin, who years ago said: "If you want to change the thought of the world you must do so through the theatre and the cinema!"

Today, the world needs some good Christian films. The time is propitious for someone to come along and present Christian ideas in an attractive manner on the screen. Mathematical figures are more eloquent than figures of speech. Some figures and facts which appeared last December in the *Los Angeles Examiner* in an article, *The Greatest Film I Ever Made*, by Cecil B. De Mille, prove that good religious films are wanted and that when the heart of a film is good the box office will look after itself.

600 Million Viewers

Cecil B. De Mille's film: *The King of Kings*, has been seen by 600 million people. In the past twenty-three years it has been played somewhere in the world every week. Every season of Lent, its 600 available prints reach their greatest circulation. In remote regions the

Pauist Fathers have shown it to audiences who have seen no other pictures. Missionaries have taken prints up the Ganges and the Congo. A missionary who replaces his old print every three years has shown the picture to 125,000 people. The picture titles have been translated into twenty-three languages, including Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, and Hindustani. An audience of more than 30,000 saw it in Inchon and Seoul, South Korea, in May 1949. During the revolution in Mexico, when the churches were closed and the clergy removed, Catholics went to theatres showing *The King of Kings* on Sundays since they could not go to Mass. The low hum of voices praying on rosary beads filled the theatre as the story unfolded.

A digest of Cecil B. De Mille's story appears in the current issue of *The Catholic Digest*, to which lively publication I am indebted for these facts and figures.

Some time ago C. A. Lejeune wrote: "Nobody, I hope at this critical time, will raise a senseless outcry about preaching in the cinema. The cinema, with its showmanship, its ritual, and its text, is really a week-day church; and *Monsieur Vincent*, with its plain illustration of what goodness means in a man, is worth a dozen sermons, preached from some wooden pulpit to blocked ears."

EDITOR.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 4: Faith and Films

By

Declan Flynn, O.F.M.

It is logical to argue that a man who has been miraculously restored to health will see life and its problems with a clarity and a simplicity that is not given to the rest of men. Such a man deserves our attention!

Power of Faith

The man I have in mind is, of course, Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., a twentieth century knight, who, astride the charger of Faith, rides out to meet the devil of Communism, with the flashing sword of the Rosary. This man who was almost dead is alive to the problems of the day and uses all the up-to-date mediums to win his battles. He believes that the cinema is a God-sent gift which can be used for the liberation of the world.

By now his story is, I think, known to most Catholics . . . he was born in Ireland of parents who gave him a great love for the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady . . . When the financial position of the large family became difficult he went to America (1928), worked for a time in the mines, then became sexton in Scranton Cathedral, during which period he felt the call to the priesthood and entered the Holy Cross Order of Notre Dame, Indiana . . . two years before ordination (1939) he was struck down with tuberculosis and death seemed imminent . . . a surgical operation was suggested, but for the surgeon's knife he substituted prayer and a deep creative confidence in Our Lady and her Divine Son. That Faith which can remove mountains removed the disease of death . . .

In the spirit of medieval chivalry, Patrick Peyton gave tangible proof of

his gratitude. To his Gracious Lady he pledged life-long devotion; the consecration of every moment of his life to the restoration of the daily Family Rosary in the homes of the Continent of America.

Tête-à-Tête

When Americans describe a man as "a good guy" they are paying him a rich compliment. (On one occasion an American told me that St. Anthony was his favourite saint and as though to emphasise the truth of what he said, he added: "Yeah, a real good guy is St. Anthony.") A number of people who knew that I was interested in the movies told me that I must see Fr. Peyton, a real good guy.

One afternoon when New York was like a Turkish bath, I called to see Fr. Peyton at the French Hospital, where all the nuns I met were Irish. "Fr. Pat's out of town," said Sister Superior, "but he'll be back any moment, he's got to be back, isn't he flying this night to Hollywood to work on his new film: *The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary*." The dear lady brought me a drink of icy cold pineapple juice and left me to the daily paper which is about twenty times the size of an English daily.

In due time Fr. Peyton came in like a breath of fresh air. He is tall, broad, very sturdy looking. It is difficult to realise that not so very long ago he was almost a dead man. He was thrilled to know that there were Catholics in England who took the right approach to the cinema and were determined that it would not be

prostituted. He asked a lot of questions about the Catholic Film Institute and came to the conclusion that in some way or another we must link up . . . "Yes, we must use the movies to spread the Faith, to bring peace to the world," he several times said.

New Stars

In his book, "The Contrast", Hilaire Belloc tells us that the ancients had a phrase: "New Stars." They said of the exile or wanderer . . . "He came to know new stars". By that phrase those wise men meant "new influences".

For me, Fr. Peyton was a new influence. He has all the charm and graciousness that you find in certain types of Celts with something plus: a humility that is most refreshing. "I live," he says, "to shake the complacency of men. The world needs the friendship, the love, the humanness of Mary in these critical days. The driving passion of my soul is to sell the Rosary to men."

He does not indulge in pious chatter. His attack is a counter-attack to Communism which has almost destroyed family life, the basis of society. He is convinced that the Family Rosary can and will restore family life; that better family life will mean a Christian national life; that the restoration of Catholic principles among nations will bring about the end of wars and restore happiness for humanity both here and hereafter. This is the underlying theme of his films, which Hollywood stars have dramatised for him.

Soldier, Priest and Poet

His film, *The Road to Peace*, has been praised universally. In it is told the story of the world as it might have been—a modern Utopia blessed with contentment and happiness for all . . . then we are shown the world as it is today . . . woes, woes and then the climax of the atom bomb . . . we are made to realise that the power of God, channeled to men by Mary Immaculate is greater than the atom bomb. We are made to realise that Our Lady has a counteracting weapon: the Rosary.

I would say that Fr. Peyton is half soldier, half poet and all priest. When

he is talking about his Rosary Crusade you would think you were listening to a military chief plotting out a battle. His organisation is first-rate. He sets out to capture a territory in a most intelligent, calm, cool and collected manner.

Publicity and organisation are the twin motors that generate the power behind the Rosary Crusade. A little army goes ahead and educates the public in the meaning of the Family Rosary and points out the benefits that accrue from it. Billboards, posters, letter-seals and window-stickers for cars and homes all carry the psychologically powerful slogan: *The family that prays together, stays together.*

There is an official Crusade Prayer and an official Crusade Hymn. The Family Theatre, which operates at Hollywood, sends out its family radio broadcasts and whenever there is a place the film-dramatisations of the Rosary are shown.

Good Planning

A few days after the official announcement of the Crusade, two chairmen from each parish are invited to a diocesan dinner meeting at which the plan of organisation is outlined. Armed with a handbook explaining their duties these Crusade Chairmen, with their pastors, begin to build compact parish groups. By the time of the last meeting, three days before the beginning of Pledge Week, the organisation has one Crusade worker for each five families in the parish. From a master list submitted by the pastor, the Central Crusade office prepares pledge cards for the individuals in each family and encloses them in an envelope bearing the name and the address of the head of the family. The envelopes are divided among the workers, who then visit in pairs the homes assigned to them.

After Fr. Peyton has visited a territory and captured it he leaves behind him a programme for developments.

Acorns and Miracles

When he is talking about the Rosary, re-creating it, helping people to grasp its power, to understand its inner meaning, to realise the spiritual atomic energy it possesses, he uses the



Fr. Peyton discussing his film "The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary" with Maureen O'Sullivan and Roddy McDowell

pictorial symbolic language of a poet.

He refers to the beads of the Rosary as acorns in which are concealed miracles.

"We see some acorns lying on the ground," he says. "Men will pass by, glance at them perhaps, but place no value upon them. Never do they stop to consider that within that little shell lie concealed potential miracles in the material order. Out of the oaks which spring from those acorns will come the wood which will be used to build houses—homes for men; the oak will supply material for planes, which will carry men from one end of the world to the other."

He now indicates a bead on his rosary . . . "This bead is an acorn—also concealing within itself unbelievable miracles not in the material order, but in the spiritual order. From it will come forth miracles of grace—blessings for body, mind and soul of each member of the

family who will devoutly speak the words Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Gloria and Creed and reverently meditate on the Mysteries."

Hollywood is Conquered

It is easy to understand how this man of Faith captures the hearts of all people and even captured the heart of Hollywood.

Here is what Pedro de Cordoba wrote about Fr. Patrick Peyton's visit to Hollywood:

"HE CAME. HE WAS SEEN AND HEARD. AND ALL WERE CONQUERED BY LOVE!"

Well, after all, what's so strange about that? Hasn't LOVE been one of the main themes in the Hollywood pattern? Or at any rate, a suggested facsimile of love has been the theme of Hollywood's productions.

But the pattern of love advanced by Father Peyton had a little of the 'new look' about it. This love was not episodic, but eternal; not glamorous

in the Hollywood sense, but established in beautiful simplicity; and miracle of miracles, instead of separating families, it brought them closer together!

Here was an old approach with a new look and Hollywood was intrigued at first, then interested and finally won over. What inspiring formula did Father Peyton possess to make such a deep impression on our Hollywood stars and bring about such extraordinary results?

If you were to ask Father Peyton, he'd probably tell you it was due to the merciful power of Our Lord through the kind intercession of His Blessed Mother.

That statement we can all readily accept.

But there is the human medium of this bestowed gift to be considered, and if you inquired of our stars why they were so deeply impressed by Father Peyton and gladly offered their services and talents without remuneration to his 'Family Theatre' radio programme, you'd probably learn that his great simplicity, genuine sincerity, abiding faith in God and his warm love for humanity, convinced them that here was a new road to follow that would

bring peace, not only into their own lives, but to the entire world.

Hollywood has always felt that love is the strongest force in a story, the strongest force in life. But too often it has forgotten that in life as well as in stories, love of God is the most inspiring and necessary force for a worthwhile and useful life.

Through the help of God and Our Lady, Father Peyton came to reawaken this realisation of love of God and to give it a vital, dramatic and real presentation by means of the 'Family Theatre' radio programme.

He had his full share of disappointments, trials, difficulties and misunderstandings, but 'Family Theatre', with the co-operation of the Mutual Broadcasting System, has come into being and has firmly established itself in the hearts of millions of listeners from coast to coast and abroad.

Hollywood is bringing to the world a new kind of love, which it is re-discovering itself.

Congratulations, Hollywood! Your new GLAMOUR becomes you and honours you with your new motto of 'THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER!'"

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS

If one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days, the Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

To date £250 has been contributed which has been expended in part payment of the films *Rome of the Pilgrims* and *Crucifers to Walsingham*. There are many other religious subjects waiting to be treated if only we can obtain the money. It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Please send a donation to Rev. J. A. V. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

THE CINEMA AND THE ENTHUSIAST

By MARYVONNE BUTCHER

Monsieur Claude Mauriac, the distinguished film critic of *Le Figaro Littéraire*, writing recently of a film which he had awaited with high hopes and had then sat through with growing disappointment, said: "J'ai rarement vu un film aussi mauvais. C'est à désespérer du cinéma. Ce qui m'arrive de plus en plus souvent. Et pourtant, je suis en la matière un homme de foi, d'espérance et de charité."

Amateur in the Real Sense

And it is as such a one who genuinely looks upon the cinema as the seventh art, who goes to the pictures with faith, hope and charity that I would like to offer a contribution to this series of different kinds of positive approach to the cinema. With no technical or professional reaction to the widespread effects and influences of the film on the life of today, beyond that of a Catholic citizen with a conscience, I can only say that I approach the screen with a positive interest and an active appreciation; always hopeful, often disappointed, delighted often enough; a member of the audience for whom a whole evening of arid mediocrity can be redeemed by one performance, one sequence, a single shot even and for whom, correspondingly, a really good film can bring one of the liveliest of pleasures.

An enthusiast then, an amateur in the real sense of the word: one of a thousand other film-goers of the same kind and prepared, moreover, to take that extra trouble without which, in this life, there is never any return in valid enjoyment. Just as the potential of the B.B.C. is wasted if *The Radio Times* is never looked at until the actual moment of listening, so the

potential of the cinema is dissipated if no effort is made to find out what is in the air, what the studios and directors are up to, what kind of films are showing at any given time. And there is little excuse for not finding out: film criticism today is surprisingly competent for so widely popular an entertainment; and in this country at any rate is on the average very much better than the equivalent criticism of the theatre. The first class critics are very good indeed, whilst with a little practice it is easy enough to detect the merely petulant prejudice and easier still to dismiss the adulation that may be sponsored by the box-office or, hardly less viciously, by sheer ignorance. Apart from what is written on films in the daily and Sunday press and in the weeklies there are the more technical journals and here, besides *Focus*, there are *Sequence* and *Sight and Sound* in which to go gleaning for the informed study of camera-man, director or work in progress. Even the purely "fan" weeklies need not be despised: they can yield on occasional fascinating detail of cast or wardrobe.

Unlimited Scope for the Enthusiast

Next, there are the private film clubs and societies which afford unrivalled chances to see old, rare and non-commercial films which might otherwise be missed; and these clubs are not the prerogative of London only, they can be found scattered all over the country. In addition, almost every town of any size has at least one cinema where the films already shown in the town come round for the second time, though only too often these are the more popular type of picture; but often there is also a small house which caters for a slightly more enterprising audience

which will put up with a certain degree of discomfort if films of intelligence and distinction can be seen, even if they are not in their first youth. The London film enthusiast has, of course, almost unlimited scope for catching up with lost opportunities and I can myself boast of having, in my time, tracked *The Magnificent Ambersons* down to East Finchley and *Blue Angel* to Putney. After all, one would never grumble at going to Glyndebourne: why should the cinema get less diligent attention merely because it is more generally accessible?

Enthusiasm Can Be Cultivated

The Catholic Film Institute, we are told, "exists with the primary object of inducing people to take the cinema seriously. That is to say, it regards the cinema as capable of contributing something of worth to human experience". A serious matter, therefore, to judge a film, and all the more important to have detachment and objectivity in the attitude brought to that judgment; and the first canon, or so it seems to me, is that no film should ever be condemned for not achieving something it was never designed to achieve. And whatever other judgments there may be, whether on grounds of morality, accuracy, intelligence or what have you, this primary evaluation on purely filmic grounds should never be overlooked. Without it no really informed enthusiasm can be cultivated, and although Mr. Goldwyn is reported in the current issue of *Sequence* as saying that "Life is compromise", no cineast can afford to compromise with objectivity. Once on that slope and *Bicycle Thieves* is banned for glorifying theft in less time than it takes to show it.

Footnotes to the Film distinguishes the film fan from the mere picture-goer in this way: "His critical faculty is developing, he can distinguish between good and bad photography and knows something of the technique of film-making." And so, the painful evolution into film fan accomplished, and with some idea of what constitutes a good film worked out for one's own satisfaction it is legitimate to go ahead and begin to cultivate a private taste; and if it seems of an almost lunatic breadth of range, what is there to

worry about here? so much the wider the range of enjoyment. And if personal taste involves the exclusion of some of the more generally accepted alphas of film-making it can at least be felt that a due assessment of merit and demerit has been made, and the verdict is not entirely based on impulse: and if the reaction still is "But I do not like it", then this may be accepted as a reasonable idiosyncrasy. I am open to conviction, for instance, that the work of Jean Vigo in *Zéro de Conduite* and *L'Atalante* is stimulating, free and of an astonishing virtuosity for its period: but to me it gives no pleasure. Henri Clouzot, I am persuaded, is a brilliant director but of the three films of his which I have seen, only *Quai des Orfèvres* did not repel by a kind of reptilian coldness of treatment. Equally, to have established canons of taste permits the personal discovery, the favouritism if you like, that every enthusiast in any field will allow himself. Why should Riabouschinska be preferred to Baronova even though the latter is clearly the purer dancer; why is it more delightful to have seen Duleepsinji bat long ago than to anticipate the triumphs of Hutton next season: impossible to bring forward cogent arguments, it simply is so. For the same reasons, then, the film fan will cherish gratefully pictures that other people seem hardly even to have noticed. *Ourselves Alone* is such a film for me, *Went the Day W'ell*, too, and *Sunday Dinner for a Soldier* and an enchanting Russian fairy-tale called *The Magic Seed*. Unpretentious, adequate and companionable, these pictures form a kind of bedside shelf of film reminiscence, different in kind and content from the formal mental library built up for real study, in which Hitchcock is listed from *Blackmail* and *Murder* through the great period to the sad decline; or *Quai des Brumes* is matched against *Le Jour se Lève*, and Chaplin ranges from the first custard-pie comedy to the recently recaptured delights of *City Lights* this winter. In the course of time, too, a whole gallery of isolated sequences from films ranging over years can be acquired, which will not only give the most subtle and enduring pleasure in themselves, but enrich and educate the whole visual approach to contemporary life. *Anna*

Christie, with Garbo in an old sweater, her hair blown back so that the lovely austere profile is quite revealed; Garbo, briefly, tying her ballet shoe in *Grand Hotel*; the lovers meeting behind the frieze of sunflowers in Korda's *Henry VIII*; the bridge shots in *Winter's End*; the trains in *Brief Encounter*; any film enthusiast can advance a collection of private sequences against the classic examples from *Potemkin*, or *Citizen Kane* or *Carnet de Bal*. A mere beginning, all this, to what can be done in the way of self-education in the cinema, for there are all the fields of acting, photography and music to be considered.

Responsibility of the Picture-Goer

No one with any sense of social responsibility can ignore the force of the cinema today; the Holy Father himself has said that it is "a matter which touches intimately the moral and religious life of the entire Christian people". If one is going to be interested or talk about it at all it seems to me that this kind of thought and study is the bare minimum which the non-specialist can afford to give: the specialist must, of course, give much more. Nothing will ever stop the person who goes to the pictures perhaps three times a year from making the wildest generalisations, but it is of no use letting the ignorant or the hostile confuse the issue by talking about all film-goers as though they were morons, on the assumption that everyone who goes often to a local cinema is automatically of no intelligence or taste. That this is nonsense everyone knows, and even so extremely intelligent a person as Miss Elizabeth Bowen will say of her reasons for going to the cinema that they . . . "seem to fall under five headings: wish to escape, lassitude, sense of lack in my nature or surroundings, loneliness (however passing) and natural frivolity". But no one could describe the author of *The Heat of the Day* as box-office fodder, and if she is a member of the public so am I and so is the President of the Catholic Film Institute: the more informed and critical I can become the greater will be my contribution to the kind of cinema I have learned to consider valuable. The cinema is the last form of entertainment, except perhaps the radio, about which

dogmatic assertions should be made. Apart from the extreme highbrows, few are consistent in their approach, for even the stupidest film-addict will occasionally see an unusual film almost by accident, and more often a good one through routine attendance, though he may describe neither as "smashing" as he would *The Black Rose*. One must accept the fact that a great many different people will like the same film for wildly different reasons, and almost perhaps for different reasons on consecutive days. The important thing to remember is that each one of us is a member of this vast picture-going public, that one should never talk of "they" in this connection without remembering humbly (or perhaps with pride) that one is an integral part of this amorphous mass: that one can, by dint of never being passive in one's acceptance of what is doled out, or what one goes to see by hazard or design, keep a critical integrity and, provided one's mind is made up on valid grounds, then proceed to influence the more passive by the mere fact of having any opinion at all. Just as *Monsieur Vincent* was brought to town after town by the initiative of the private film enthusiasts, so one can bring influence to bear in one's own circle to a degree that can hardly be assessed until the experiment is made. Father Burke, in his masterly preface to the Focus Film Course, says, indeed, everything that needs to be said on this subject, and I cannot do better than to conclude with his wise and stimulating words. "Just as there are many cultured people who are skilled in the appreciation of music, even though they may not themselves be able to perform on any musical instrument, so with the cinema, it is possible and, indeed, desirable, that there should be a vast number of people skilled in the appreciation of film: not because they intend to become film producers or directors, but because by knowing what is good and what is bad about the art of the film, they may be in a position to control the output of film by exercising pressure at the most sensitive part of the cinema, namely, the box-office."

Heartened by this, let all enthusiasts feel that their personal enjoyment, addiction even, can be turned to positive good by canalising their energy a very little more.

"THE PRODUCTION CODE"

—ITS CHARACTER AND PURPOSES

By MARTIN QUIGLEY

This article is by Martin Quigley, publisher and editor-in-chief of a group of motion picture industry publications, including "Motion Picture Herald", "Motion Picture Daily", "Motion Picture Almanac" and "Fame".

In 1929 Mr. Quigley originated a "Code" to govern the moral and social implications of the entertainment film. In the following year he introduced this Code to the Hollywood producers and gained its adoption by the producers' association. Since its adoption it has provided a rule of moral guidance to the producers of more than ninety per cent of the films produced in the United States whose productions normally occupy in excess of seventy-five per cent of the screen time of the cinemas of the world.

Mr. Quigley is author of a book entitled "Decency in Motion Pictures" (1937). Since 1915, when he established "Motion Picture Herald", he has been active in various causes devoted to the maintenance of right moral and social standards in entertainment films.

March 1950 marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of "The Production Code" by the organised motion picture industry in the United States.

In the two decades that have elapsed since its introduction the Code has experienced an eventful career. It has encountered both approval and scorn which, to be sure, is understandable enough in view of the subject matter with which it treats and its basic commitment to the primacy of the moral law.

Good Intentions Not Good Enough

The development of the Code grew out of long and intimate study of the medium and its audience effect. From this study the eventual conclusion was reached that the maintenance of right moral and social standards in motion picture entertainment was not to be achieved merely by good intentions, neither were they to be effected

by idealistic pronouncement, however sincere.

The need for an organised method of approach of a kind never previously attempted in the history of the theatre eventually became exceedingly clear. Currently this conclusion was receiving timely emphasis. Despite intense and evidently sincere effort to maintain decent standards, contrary results were appearing in an increasing measure and frequency. The medium had lately become articulate with the introduction of sound. With its newly-found facility it was drifting into the employment of much undesirable material of a type that was not dealt with in the silent film.

Generally persons engaged in the various processes of production, however talented and ingenious in the histrionic arts, are not—and could not be expected to be—trained and experienced moralists. Yet their subject matter is of the essence of morality.

Need for Guidance

The typical motion picture story is one in which certain characters are placed in a relationship with one another and are then confronted with some order of problem. The nature of the relationships and the manner in which the impending problem is faced is the stuff of morality. The moral attitudes which the screen portrays with unique graphicness inevitably are calculated to influence the thoughts of an audience and consequently colour its behaviour.

An imperative need was found for a reasonable and workable rule of guidance, as a beacon light, with respect to morality for persons engaged in writing, directing and producing theatrical films for mass audiences—audiences comprising many age, social and cultural groups. The Production Code sought to fulfil that need.

With the determination made to provide such a code of guidance and regulation, the specialised training and experience of Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J., theologian, educator and author, were enlisted for the preparation of the definitive document which was eventually adopted by the Motion Picture Producers' and Distributors' Association of America, Inc., on March 31st, 1930, under the title, "A Code to Govern the Making of Talking, Synchronised and Silent Motion Pictures".

Out of this collaboration a working manual of instruction and guidance was developed. The purpose was to present, plainly and clearly, a reasoned statement of the moral responsibility inherent in the production of motion pictures, and an exposition of the objective moral principles that apply to the various categories of words and deeds as they may be employed in dramatic representation.

The Code sought—and we believe succeeded—in effecting a practicable application of the moral dogmas revealed in the Ten Commandments to the function of motion picture production.

Art and the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments were the ruling guide in the preparation of the Code. Niceties of the theological

distinction were avoided. No particular doctrinal questions were dealt with. The foundation upon which the exposition and regulations were based consisted simply of the elemental standard of human conduct to which, formally at least, the whole Western World subscribes.

The Code has proved to be neither narrow-minded nor unduly restrictive. It is negative in character only in the sense that the Ten Commandments are negative. Just as the Ten Commandments prescribe a code of behaviour that men may live within the dictates of divine and natural law, so does the Motion Picture Code provide to motion picture production an illumined and specialised way to the same end. The Code seeks to fulfil that injunction of Pope Pius XI which, in his encyclical on motion pictures, tells us that, "The essential purpose of art . . . is to assist in the perfection of the moral personality of man, and for this reason art itself must be moral."

The Code does not undertake to legislate for virtue, except such virtue as is the reward of the avoidance of evil. Taking first things first, and recognising that the primary responsibility of the producer is to make certain that the subject matter and treatment of the films under his jurisdiction are not reasonably capable of exerting an unwholesome and corrosive influence upon audiences, the Code does not attempt to tell the producer what to produce or how to produce it—save only with respect to the *moral* influence of the completed picture.

The concept out of which the Code was originated and developed prescinds from the curious absorption in the artistic which has overwhelmed many serious-minded persons in their contemplation of the potentialities of the medium.

However desirable it may be to speed the development of ever-loftier standards of the art, there still remains the ponderable fact that we are here dealing with a *mass-form* of entertainment—one to which a vast public is continuously exposed. Under the awful significances of the spiritual destiny of man, if we are to treat with first things first, the fundamental

imperative is that the film in its influence shall not be in conflict with the moral law. That is the end which the Code seeks to serve.

Encourage and spur the producer to pursue the highest ideals of the art, prompt him to strive for the ennoblement of his audience, by all means, but—more importantly—warn him, guide him and encourage him to avoid depraving his audience!

A film may be pleasing to a large audience without even approaching the legitimate standards of art. It may even be trivial and commonplace, but if it does not offend the moral law it fulfils a useful social function in innocently occupying the leisure time of a public lacking in interior resources, to whom idleness is often an opportunity for mischief. "Recreation in its manifold variety has become a necessity of people who labour under the fatiguing conditions of modern industry but it must be worthy of the rational nature of man and therefore must be morally healthy," declares the Papal Encyclical. Therefore, no matter what intellectual and artistic heights a film may attain, if it tends to lower the moral standards of its audience it is an evil thing.

During the whole of its vital career the Code has been given competent, painstaking and loyal application by Mr. Joseph I. Breen and his staff, who comprise the Production Code Administration, the authority charged by the producers with responsibility for enforcement of the Code's provisions.

The Code and the Film Industry

While the Code has performed no miracles, it has been the means of stemming the approach of a vast quantity of unfit material. It has been the means of eliminating or tempering much objectionable detail. It has through the years elevated the prevailing concepts of production in relation to what constitutes legitimately admissible screen material within the moral law and the norms of acceptability that prevail amongst the peoples of the Western World.

Under trial and experiment the Code has won an increasing respect and support from principal persons in the

executive echelon of the American industry. Aside from its effects within areas of morality, it has been hailed as a saving influence against external criticism and attack and is credited with enhancing the character, status and stability of the motion picture and the industry.

The Code has not escaped, and doubtlessly never will wholly escape, the slings and arrows of persons who espouse the moral error of art for art's sake, by persons who reject the spiritual destiny of man and the divine ordinances which everlastingly govern the moral order. It has not escaped pillory at the hands of arty Leftists and confused Liberals. It has not been free of the assaults, evasions and trickeries of those who, unmindful of the awful responsibilities inherent in the medium, and indifferent as to its public repute, seek only commercial advantage.

There is no cause, however, to regard any part of this as being other than what is to be expected in the common order of mundane events. If all persons concerned with the production of motion pictures were fully and intelligently informed on the requirements of the moral law and were heartily devoted to the observance of these requirements the film would offer no moral problem and there would be no need for a motion picture code.

But such a status presumes a spiritual and moral millennium which is not to be expected forthwith in Hollywood, any more than in New York, London, Paris, Rome, Brussels or Madrid. In the meantime, sitting by with folded hands and an expression of pained disdain offers no promise of hastening a betterment. The weeds grow and the garden must be cultivated by dint of detailed and painstaking effort. The Code has proved, within the limitations of the environment of a commercial industry peopled by a miscellany of men and women, an effective weeding tool.

Surprise and Disappointment

While the Code has encountered hostility and opposition in certain areas for reasons that are abundantly clear, the lack of understanding and interest which it has elsewhere

met with has contributed surprise and disappointment.

Its basic concept, which is simply a workable application of the Decalogue to the processes of production, would seem to afford a common meeting ground for all persons who subscribe to the principles of objective morality.

Its basic approach to the problem of the regulation of the moral content of films must be recognised as not being subject to legitimate substitution or variation. Hence the indifferent and sometimes captious attitude of persons who profess solicitude for the moral integrity of the film and the welfare of its audiences seems to find explanation only in reasons other than objective and open-minded study.

During these late years in which the citadel of Western Civilisation has been besieged by grave moral error, when on many fronts what is good is condemned as evil and what is evil promoted as good, the Code has ministered with salutary effect to that medium which is incomparable in its influence upon the peoples of the world.

Its failures and its shortcomings in practice, as deplorable as they may be, are insignificant in comparison with the dynamic force for decency which it has exerted. Informed persons can only envision with keen trepidation what might otherwise have been the result under the unrelenting pressures that have been present.

The pressures will continue and the good fight must go on. In this purpose the active aid of all men of goodwill is urgently needed.

Key to pictures on page 113

1. Crocker-Harris (Michael Redgrave) has just had a passage of arms with Wilson (Paul Medland).
2. Millie (Jean Kent) is scornful of her husband's meticulousness.
3. Millie and Frank Hunter (Nigel Patrick), the science master.
4. Millie taunts her husband.
5. Taplow (Brian Smith), causes Crocker-Harris to break down.
6. Crocker-Harris expresses his pleasure at Taplow's present.
7. Crocker-Harris makes a moving farewell speech.
8. Millie leaves her husband, Crocker-Harris.

Film Strips on the Mass

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FOCUS FILM COURSE. Part Two. No. 3

THE SCENARIST

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

A film, like a house, must be built to a plan, and the architect is the writer of the scenario. Whether he be given a novel, play or original story, his method of approach is basically the same. First, he extracts all sequences and incidents possessing pictorial value, whilst carefully noting the importance of all passages, dialogue and characterisation which cannot be translated into visuals. Then he prepares a treatment, which is a non-technical synopsis of the subject, varying from 1,000 to, say, 10,000 words. The treatment presents the scenarist's suggested film version of the subject, and provides a basis for discussion, revision and elaboration. Some scenes will be cut out; others, which may not have appeared in the novel or play being adapted, are inserted to increase film value. Only when a treatment has been finally approved does the scenarist retire to begin the lengthy task of writing the scenario. This is a detailed document containing an analysis of every sequence, every scene, and every camera angle within each scene. In addition, it contains all dialogue and suggested movements of characters. Often, dialogue is written by a specialist and passed to the scenarist to insert in his script.

Despite the fact that an expertly written scenario is a blue print of the film to be, it leaves scope for the imaginative director to improve upon the presentation of scenes according to circumstances whilst filming is in progress. However, before production can commence, the scenario has to be rewritten into the form of a shooting script. Imagine having spent weeks arranging hundreds of pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and then when all are in position, you tilt the table and they tumble into a heap. At first sight, a shooting script seems to resemble the disarranged jigsaw puzzle, for all the

carefully numbered scenes in the scenario in chronological order are now regrouped, disregarding story order or continuity, but being collected into scene groups, so that all action taking place in the hospital ward, the drawing room, or the cellar, can be filmed on consecutive days. Similarly, various exteriors are grouped. Thus, actual filming is a fragmentary business. There is no evidence of the final story in the scenes being made at any given moment. And yet if this was not done, a scene would be erected and demolished every time it recurred in a story.

Upon the imagination of the scenarist the success of a film largely depends. He is more than a novelist, dramatist or journalist, for he possesses a very special visual sense and thinks in terms of pictures. But he is also a technician with full knowledge of directing, camerawork, recording and editing—otherwise, he could not create a practical scenario. There are few writers of religious scenarios as yet, and it is time they began to appear, for upon their inspiration depends the future of the religious film.

FOCUS FILM COURSE PRIMER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Handbooks comprising introductory articles on all the lectures comprising the first series of the Focus Film Course are now available, price 1s. 6d. nett. Obtainable from More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7, or from Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*

THE BROWNING VERSION

Starring: Michael Redgrave, Jean Kent and Nigel Patrick, with Wilfrid Hyde-White, Ronald Howard and Brian Smith.
Producer: Anthony Asquith.
Director: Anthony Asquith.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 90 minutes.

This film has an "A" Certificate with the qualification that it is more suitable for adults. We can safely put it in Category "B" for, though it treats an adult theme with sophistication, it is not beyond the perception of intelligent adolescents who are willing to take some trouble to understand a serious film.

The Story

The story of *The Browning Version* is, in effect, a psychopsy, that is to say, an investigation into the minds of two people whose love for each other has withered into contempt and hatred. Andrew Crocker-Harris, who arrived at his college as Classics Master with a brilliant academic record has to resign his post owing to ill-health. His wife, Millie, is a bitter, frustrated woman, whose social ambitions have been blasted by her husband's constitutional weakness. She is a passionate type and seeks consolation in a liaison with the science-master, Frank Hunter. She taunts her husband with the fact of her infidelity, but he withdraws into himself and shows the world a forbidding façade of austere and aloof scholarship. He is cordially disliked by the boys, despised by the

Headmaster and pitied by his colleagues.

One boy, Taplow, having a sympathetic streak, reaches behind the forbidding exterior by means of an ingenuous gift of the Browning version of the Agamemnon. This proves to be the key which releases a whole flood of repressed emotions and culminates in Andrew's liberation from his wife's domination and the hope of a happier though lonely life for the future.

The film, from Terence Ratigan's short play, is excellently mounted; the transition from stage to screen, though not imperceptible, is smooth and efficient; the sets, by Carmen Dillon, are impressive and convincing and the photography pleasing and unfussy. The direction has Anthony Asquith's stamp of sincerity.

Superb Study by Redgrave

The outstanding achievement in this film is Michael Redgrave's superb study of Andrew Crocker-Harris. It is the best thing he has ever done on the screen and places him at the very top of our small group of first-class character actors. It is a magnificent, rounded, minutely-observed performance and should win him a prize at this year's Festivals.

Wilfrid Hyde-White is also most satisfying as the worldly-wise and cagey Head. Jean Kent works hard as Millie, though she does not convince us that she is a great actress. Ronald Howard fits the rôle of Andrew's young successor. Nigel Patrick plays the Science Master, Frank Hunter, with skill and care and Brian Smith is a boy who makes Taplow a very appealing young character.

Distinctly a film to be seen and savoured and seen again.

V.





Left: Dunnigan (Paul Douglas) is successful in persuading Robert Cosick (Richard Basehart) to come off the ledge. Above: Mrs. Cosick (Agnes Moorehead) arrives to talk to her son

FOURTEEN HOURS

Starring: Paul Douglas, Richard Basehart, Barbara Bel Geddes, Debra Paget. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 92 minutes.

Although the dialogue suggests that attempted suicide is not uncommon in America, this particular attempt seems to have caused quite a stir. The film tells the story of the wearing out of a long day while a boy stands on a skyscraper ledge contemplating a jump. Everything in the city, despite the fact that it is St. Patrick's Day, stops to await the outcome. The reactions of the various characters involved take up the story with a level of acting which is extremely high. The pathos of the boy's situation is skilfully deepened by the half awareness of the general public. Paul Douglas, as traffic policeman Dunnigan carries away the acting honours and Agnes Moorehead gives a more than competent portrayal of the would-be suicide's mother. Altogether a very good film with its moral not too heavily underlined. The story gives the photographers a field day and they have taken the opportunity.

J. C.

RAWHIDE

Starring: Tyrone Power, Susan Hayward, Hugh Marlowe, Dean Jagger. **Director:** Henry Hathaway. **Producer:** Samuel G. Engel. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 86 minutes.

This is a Western, with the usual ingredients: tough guys, in stage coach, laden with gold, dashing across wide open spaces, pursued by other tough guys. There is a hold-up, of course, and plenty of shooting. It is all very grim. Not for a moment is there a flicker of a smile. Humour is conspicuous by its absence.

The film is well made. It has space. The acting is competent. The photography is most pleasing. Henry Hathaway directs it, which means that there is plenty of suspense, almost too much. As a bit of escapism it is good enough; but it is surely going too far to have a baby playing in a film of this type, particularly when the baby is shot at by a sadistic brute in order to force Tyrone Power to surrender. I found this a bit too raw for my mental hide.

E.



Mrs. Cosick breaks down in her efforts to persuade her son against jumping to his death



Virginia (Barbara Bel Geddes) is called in to try to persuade her ex-fiance to abandon the idea of jumping to his death

WEDDING BELLS

Starring: Fred Astaire, Jane Powell, Peter Lawford, Sarah Churchill. **Producer:** Arthur Freed. **Director:** Stanley Donen. Presented by M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

This dancing and light musical film has for backcloth, as it were, the Royal Wedding and thus makes a special appeal to a British audience. It is a cheerful little affair which disarms criticism. Yet mounting my ponderous war-horse I enter the lists.

By some trick photography Fred Astaire is represented as dancing on the walls and ceiling of a room. He does so because he is in love. But even making allowances for this pardonable condition, is it desirable for him to carry on so long that we pray that he may fall down on his head and put an end to it? With solo dancing, particularly, our interest is fungible. And upside down as well, I ask you.

Astaire is as accomplished and indefatigable as ever. Jane Powell gives a first-rate performance, suiting her part admirably.

In its category this film is above average.

V.

THE STEEL HELMET

Starring: Robert Hutton, Richard Loo, Steve Brodie, Gene Evans. **Written, Produced and Directed** by Samuel Fuller.

This is a fictional film of the war in Korea and it comes off. It is, I think, a much better film than *All Quiet on the Western Front* for the reason that it is more objective and therefore a better record—therefore a better piece of propaganda, if that is its purpose. The action of the story begins when Sergeant Zack (Gene Evans) is found wounded by Short Round (William Chun), the Korean war orphan. There is a good performance by William Chun, who comes to the aid of Sergeant Zack. Gene Evans gives a memorable performance of the savage sergeant who, despite his wounds, hops along, biting a cigar, always on the look out for the enemy. He is a courageous fellow.

The film is well made and the exterior photography is very good indeed. It is not too long.

E.



Left: A young lady achieves her ambition to become an air-stewardess. Above: She charms everyone

THREE GUYS NAMED MIKE

Starring: Jane Wyman, Van Johnson, Howard Keel and Barry Sullivan.

Producer: Armand Sheldon.

Director: Charles Walters. A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Production.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B. **Rollicking time:** A short hour and a half.

Here is a pleasant, witty and gay comedy that I think everyone will like, if it is safe to say of anything that everyone will like it. (I thought all boys liked ices, until the other day I met *one*—the only one—that didn't.) If you are the odd one who doesn't like this, consult your doctor, a psychiatrist or go to the bath room and take a dose.

The slender story simply relates how a forthright young lady (Jane Wyman) achieves her ambition to become a stewardess on the American Airlines, and how, in the process, she charms everyone in the film, and in the audience too. See the film. She will charm you too. But in particular she captivates three men, each of whom is more handsome than the other, and each of whom bears very inconveniently

the same name, "Mike". They all have equal chances—almost, but not quite! An occasional quadrangle is a change from the "eternal triangle", and is more fun.

G.

THE GHOST GOES WEST

Starring: Robert Donat and Jean Parker, with Eugene Pallette and Elsa Lanchester. **Director:** Rene Clair.

Distributors: London Films. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 85 minutes approx.

This reissue of a film which caught the popular fancy when it was first sent out in 1936 still has much to amuse and entertain. I confess that I found the rather extravagant guying of American publicity foibles less funny than I used to remember and the tilts at the Scottish less amusing than I used to think they were.

Still, I am sure that younger cinema-goers will find much to laugh at in the story of the 200-year-old ghost who is compelled to travel with the dismantled stones and panels of his Scottish castle when it is purchased

by an American business man and taken down, "stone by stone and panel by panel", to be re-erected on the sand of his Florida estate.

There is, of course, much satire in telling the story and, perhaps, some uncertainty as to what proportions comedy and burlesque should occupy in such a plot. Theological hairs ought not, I suppose, to be split over such a story, though I must own that I am puzzled as to the place Limbo occupies and do not understand why it is that namby-pamby characters in real life apparently make such terrifying ghosts when they are dead!

Robert Donat is satisfactory as both ghost and present-day Glourie. Eugene Pallette enjoys himself as the American who buys the haunted lot and Jean Parker seems refreshingly natural as the girl who loves ghosts, particularly Scottish ones. Even I noticed that the clothes the ladies wear are no longer fashionable, but that will not, I think, hinder anybody's enjoyment of the film. It is, however, sad that the film itself has not worn so well as the clothes.

V.

POOL OF LONDON

Starring: Bonar Colleano, Susan Shaw, Renee Asherson, Moira Lister, Earl Cameron, with Max Adrian, Joan Dowling, James Robertson Justice. **Producer:** Michael Balcon. **Director:** Basil Dearden. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

It's really only cops and robbers again, linked to the Merchant Service by a bit of smuggling. A watchman gets murdered—that is the chief function of watchmen in the films—and James Robertson Justice gets hosed full in the beard. (One day I hope someone will make a film called *Timber of the Proms*, with this actor taking the part of Sir Henry Wood.) The fight between two young women could perfectly easily have been left out as such things get the cinema a bad name.

Those who know the City and Port

of London will be pleased with the backgrounds. But this is not one of the best films about London to come from Ealing Studios. This is a pity, as a good deal of trouble has been taken: the synopsis programme alone must have cost quite a lot. Nor will the picture earn many dollars, for there is a gentle and indeterminate romance between a white girl and a nice coloured seaman, memorably played by Earl Cameron. But I thought that the critic who described this as a "liaison" had quite misconceived it.

Q.

MR. DRAKE'S DUCK

Starring: Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Yolande Donlan, with Wilfred Hyde-White, Jon Pertwee, A. E. Matthews, Howard Marion-Crawford, Reginald Beckwith. **Producer:** Daniel M. Angel. **Director:** Val Guest. **Distributors:** Eros Films. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes.

In this atom-conscious and bureaucratic era a uranium egg has distinct farcical possibilities. The basic idea is of a duck extracting elements from the soil and naturally yielding what scientists labour to produce. But it is an idea which will not last for the standard length of a feature film. The producer must have been hard put to it at times, as is borne out by the title. And so there has to be a pointless prelude, which will seem poor unless you are one of those fortunate people who can double up with laughter at such incidents as a carpenter putting a plank through a window and saying: "It's all right. I'm a glazier too."

But once the egg is laid and the military take charge of the farm there is plenty to laugh at. The veteran, A. E. Matthews, steals the scene during a short appearance as a Brigadier. Frank Phillips is effective as Frank Phillips. Reginald Beckwith should not be confused—as he has been—with Reginald Beck, the director and editor of films.

Q.

FLESH AND BLOOD

Starring: Richard Todd, Glynis Johns, Joan Greenwood, André Morell. Adapted and Produced by Anatole de Grunwald. **Director:** Anthony Kimmins. **Distributors:** British Lion Corporation. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 102 minutes.

To read the names of the personalities behind this production is to expect something more than competent. On coming away one realises that the acting was of a high standard, that the direction flashed almost monotonously into cleverness, and that the production was painstakingly accurate in the matter of period. It is a long business running through three generations, exciting and masterly though the evocative transitions were.

The story is based on the play, "The Sleeping Clergyman" of James Bridie. It opens with a medical student in Glasgow who is brilliant, reprobate, arrogant, rude and dying. He in fact dies after a quarrel with one of his "conquests", who happens to be the sister of the reliable humdrum doctor who believes in him. She dies bearing his daughter and honest Dr. Marshall (André Morell) adopts her. She grows up into a most attractive minx (Joan Greenwood), who murders her lover and, after marriage, commits suicide, leaving her baby son in the care of—why, Dr. Marshall, of course. Poor Marshall now rapidly ageing takes on this new charge, still looking for justification on the third generation for his high hopes of genius.

After a period of wildness, selfishness, arrogance and rudeness the young Charles Cameron Sutherland (Richard Todd) passes brilliantly in the medical schools and settles down to research. We end up in Italy with him being horribly rude to everyone (for, of course, he is a genius and we all know geniuses are like that), but he does eventually cultivate the serum capable of putting an end to a plague.

Faith and Science have a fair showing and not at all in conflict either. Early

on, Dr. Marshall notes: "Don't you think God has a very good idea of the principles of biology". And the only person Sutherland is not rude to is the nun who spends herself in the ward of dying patients. I thought this Sister Anna of Lilly Kann was one of the most authentic cinema nuns I've seen.

A bit long, a bit choppy, very sad and well worth seeing, I think.

X.

STORM WARNING

Starring: Ginger Rogers, Ronald Reagan, Doris Day. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 89 minutes.

All the intelligent acting in this film cannot make it other than a sorry affair bordering on the horrific. We are told before the film begins that it is in no way a portrait of American life, that it is not typical of any town in the States—and indeed we hope not. But one has an uneasy feeling that it may not be too far from the truth, just as when authors assure us the characters are entirely fictional we somehow suspect that it is just a decoy to prevent our identifying the models. And if it is a sad commentary on American life in particular, it is equally devastating on human beings in general.

The story tells how a young mannequin (Ginger Rogers) fortuitously visiting a small town that is dominated by the Ku-Klux-Klan arrives just in time to witness an appalling crime by that secret society and how, to the tune of breathless excitement, she is instrumental in showing up the entire gang. The film is evidently meant to hit hard at intolerance of all kinds, and although it does not actually achieve this it is definitely on the side of the angels.

The acting is sufficiently convincing to evoke a real loathing of these horrible people. Good performances are given by most of the cast, but especially by Ginger Rogers and Steve Cochran.

G.

OUR VERY OWN

Starring: Ann Blyth, Farley Granger, Joan Evans. **Director:** David Miller. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

Advertisements tell the public that "You must see this film with someone you love very much". This admonition did not, however, apply to those invited to the Press Show, for on my ticket were clearly printed the austere words "Admit one". Possibly Mr. Samuel Goldwyn thought that the presence of the beloved might distract critics from the film: personally I would have welcomed any distraction whatever, beloved or otherwise.

For this is one of the sloppiest and most sentimental pictures it has been my lot to see for a long time. More's the pity, since the idea of the story is a good one—that of the eldest of three daughters who is suddenly told by her younger sister that she is adopted, and her reactions to this startling discovery. But any opportunity there may have been of producing something interesting is completely thrown away.

Mr. Farley Granger and Miss Ann Blyth (the elder and adopted daughter) kiss each other at frequent intervals (though a much-advertised photograph of their doing so in a minimum of clothing should not lead anyone to think that the film is ever unworthy of its "U" certificate); the parents of the three girls sentimentalise equally over their real and adopted daughters and over themselves; the two elder sisters, one adopted, one genuine, end in each other's arms after quarrelling like two cats over Mr. Granger; and everyone seems to have a very soft spot for the third and smallest sister, who I thought needed a sound smacking, though I must admit that she behaved better as the film went on.

The acting is indifferent, except for a fine performance by Ann Dvorak as the adopted girl's real mother.

But possibly you may appreciate the film more than I did—if, that is, you do as Mr. Goldwyn advises and are prepared to pay for two seats.

T. C. F.

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS

Starring: George Raft, Coleen Gray, Enzo Staiola. **Producer:** Joseph Kaufman. **Director:** Joseph M. Newman. **Distributors:** Independent Film Distributors Ltd. in association with British Lion Film Corporation Ltd. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 83 minutes.

There is much to enjoy in this film. It is a thriller with a plot rather out of the ordinary, and one is quite relieved to find that it does not resolve itself into a mere hunt for the murderer of the man whose corpse is found in Nick Cain's suite in the luxury hotel at San Paolo, a town situated (anyhow for purposes of this film) on the coast of the Mediterranean. Be that as it may, the picture was shot in Italy, and there are some really entrancing views, particularly in the ruined village where Nick and his girl hide when things are getting a bit too hot for them. It is also a relief that the shooting at the final meeting of the Good Lot with the Bad Lot is reduced to a minimum: one appreciated so much more the complete discomfiture of the Bads.

George Raft as Nick Cain, the well known American gambler (but a right good fellow for all that) and Coleen Gray as Kay Wonderly, the woman who supports him in his troublous adventures and with whom he of course falls in love in the process, do most adequately all that is required of them; and there is a good performance by Charles Goldner as Massine, who appears at first to be going to make things unpleasant for Nick, but eventually turns out to be his chief helper. And it was a delightful and unexpected surprise to meet again the boy Enzo Staiola. He has grown considerably since he charmed us all in *Bicycle Thieves*, and the quality of his acting has increased with his stature. He has also learnt a few words (only a few, I am glad to say) of American, but he stills remains the delightful and inimitable Italian "monello", who does much to help Nick and Kay in their difficulties and finally walks out of the picture with an arm round each of them.

Don't miss this film, particularly if you love Italy.

T. C. F.

THE 13th LETTER

Starring: Linda Darnell, Charles Boyer, Constance Smith, Michael Rennie, Françoise Rosay.
Producer and Director: Otto Preminger. *Certificate:* A.
Category: B. *Running time:* 84 minutes.

I trust you will forgive a personal reminiscence. It has only indirect value so far as this film is concerned, but nevertheless I feel you may care to hear of it. I have a friend living somewhere in the South of England who wishes to remain anonymous yet whose name is among the best known in the land. I gained his esteem by rendering him a trifling service (I gave a fair imitation of a dog barking, thus warning him of a lurking assailant) and have ever since kept up the friendship by an occasional visit.

When last I saw him he greeted me by saying: "I see that you have travelled down by Green Line Coach, that you sat facing the engine and that you dropped your cigarette ash down the neck of the lady sitting in front of you."

I changed the subject; it was painful. "You are still devoted to your old mouse coloured dressing gown," I remarked. I take this opportunity of making clear a point that is not fully appreciated: the gown in question is house mouse coloured not field mouse.

"Only the unseeing refer with disparagement to mouse colour," he replied with some feeling. "Mark my words a fortune awaits the man who first starts a mouse farm."

You will be glad to learn that he has many quiet interests which provide relaxation for an ever active and enquiring mind. When I arrived he was on his hands and knees in the kitchen hitting the flagstones with a hammer to see whether they emitted radio activity. He informed me that he is learning Latin in order to study the Summa of St. Thomas. "I want to find out how good a detective he would have made," he said.

"A laudable pursuit," I said, "but the ids and quods and quidquids that sprinkle every sentence will get you down."

"You would measure my brain by your own," he said with something approaching sarcasm. But his principal

pre-occupation is the composition of a monograph on his brother Mycroft, whom he declares to have the finest mind of any man living. Is Mycroft behind the flying saucer mystery?—that is the problem.

As I could see that he was about to lapse into a fit of abstraction on the mention of this matter, I recounted to him the plot of *The 13th Letter*, which I had just seen.

"I cannot remember ever having to solve a case involving poison pen letters," he said, "but even that old fool Poirot could have done infinitely better than the morons of your film. Why don't they take a case from real life if they cannot manufacture a plausible story out of their heads?"

"You musn't be too critical," I replied. "The ordinary person wants a couple of hours escape into make believe."

"My dear T.," he said, "pardon the irritation of an old man. I think we expect perfection in too imperfect a spirit."

He concluded by asking me to give his best wishes to readers of the *Focus*. "They are made of stern stuff," he said.

T.

A WALK IN THE SUN

Starring: Dana Andrews, Richard Conte, Richard Tyne. **Producer:** Lewis Milestone. *Certificate:* A.
Category: A.

The fact that I had been fighting in Italy, or pretending to fight, seemed to be a good reason for my reviewing this film which is no more or less than a few hectic hours in the life of a platoon of American G.I.s who are dumped on the Salerno beaches at the beginning of the invasion of Italy. But, of course, it gave me the difficulty of finding criticisms which might not be obvious to the less initiated, if that is I can claim to be initiated myself. Be that as it may, I find almost everything to praise in this film, which to my mind is so superior after a film like *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Here you have a story told with truth and candour which would hardly get past the military authorities in England. But it is told too without any idea of propaganda for peace.

I do not know if it would be a damaging criticism to American films

in general if I said that the main attraction to me about this particular piece is that it has managed to capture some of the vigour and reality that we find almost exclusively in French and Italian films today. Perhaps it is the setting!

The story is very simple. The lieutenant, like so many keen young officers, has his head up, and gets killed before reaching the shore. The platoon sergeant goes to report to someone, and is also killed. The next top-sergeant takes over, and the platoon sticks strictly to orders, digging in no more than a hundred yards from the beach, waiting for the sergeant who never comes back. Daylight finds them moaning at the dirt, moaning at the delay, moaning at the lack of orders and smoking endless "butts". There follows a typical battle conversation over the identity of aeroplanes, and an intense bombing of the beach, with a straffing of themselves, which gives them the necessary urge to set off. They advance, they get dived upon, they lose some casualties and the top-sergeant loses his nerve. Sergeant Tyne takes over (Dana Andrews), they knock out a German armoured car, advance on their objective, a farm, and after considerable difficulty take it. Just a walk in the sun.

It doesn't sound much of a story? Well it isn't. But there is a very definite kick in it. It's real life. It is just what happened. In war things seldom go right. In war, man is shaken by losing his friends. In war, it is the endless talker, Rivera here (Richard Conte), who keeps the rest cheerful, with empty but heartening nonsense. Perhaps it is because I can see the characters so well portrayed that I enjoyed this. But I do not think it is only that. There is a humour, a candour, a simplicity that is winning.

There can be no doubt that the piece goes to Richard Conte, with his wisecracks and his beloved machine-gun, with which he could never hit the target, so that he had to bribe another man to get the job of gunner. There is the soldier who is always writing a letter to his sister Frances telling her where he is and what's going on. There is Sergeant Tyne, taking over and puzzled by his authority, not knowing what to do, but going on. There is the Italian, enlisted in the States, who interprets for the two

Eytie prisoners, and finds that one comes from his father's home town.

There is much more, but I think you should see it. It may not all be pleasant, the theme may be one you would rather forget. But I think you should see it. Because it is so true, it may not have a run. Many will say it cannot happen like that; it is too fantastic. Not really, except that the numbers of the platoon never diminish, however many are killed. But I still think you should go to see it. H.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Starring: Errol Flynn, with Patricia Wymore and Scott Forbes.

Director: William Keighley.

Distributors: Warner Brothers.

Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

Running time: 85 minutes approx.

A film which involves scenes with riding horsemen, Indians and rocky mountains is almost bound to be popular with most cinema-goers. Story matters little and acting need be of the sketchiest: so long as the cameraman knows his stuff, the film is in the bag.

This is the case with *Rocky Mountain*. The story is slight: a Confederate Patrol, led by Errol Flynn, is trying to rouse the West to side with General Robert E. Lee against the Yankees. A girl, riding to meet her Yankee fiancé, is overtaken by Red Indians, rescued by the Confederate Lieutenant, who, being a gentleman, always touches his hat and says "Ma'am" when talking to a lady and who, to prove that white men must stick together, rides out with his patrol to face certain death at the hands of the Indians while the girl escapes to her future husband.

Errol Flynn is convincing as the Confederate Lieutenant and Scott Forbes (alias "Julian Dallas" when in England) is pleasing as the Yankee Captain. Patricia Wymore, the latest Mrs. Flynn in real life, has little to do except look impossibly proper on the Californian desert.

The two gentlemen who lead the opposing American forces in the film are, curiously, both British. Rather an achievement in a Hollywood film. Which only goes to show that Irene Dunne was in good company as Queen Victoria.

On the other hand, the supporting cast left nothing to be desired as far as names go, including such rare sobriquets as Slim Pickens, Chubby Johnson, Buzz Henry, Sheb Wooley and Yakim Canute. Their accents were in keeping with their labels.

A little mongrel dog plays an

appealing rôle as the link between stern duty and sentiment, and the music which accompanies his frequent dashes across the desert to catch up with his master is calculated to satisfy those multitudes who think a film is first class so long as it has a dog in it. V.

DOMANI E TROPPO TARDI

(Tomorrow is too late)

Starring: Vittorio de Sica, Anna Maria Pierangelo and Gabriele Dorziat.
Director: Leonide Leurini.
Distributors: London Films.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 100 minutes approx.

Rarely do hordes of teen-age school-children on the screen inspire one with anything but sentiments of revulsion. In spite of the fact that the Italian children depicted in *Domani e troppo Tardi* are going through the colt stage and calf-love period of their development and so behave abominably to one another they are tolerable because they are recognisable types and true to life.

This film tells tenderly and with restraint the story of the efforts of two school-teachers, a man and woman (no romance here!) to deal with the emotional adolescent problems of their charges in face of an old-fashioned and basically Jansenistic opposition.

The difficulties and traps to be avoided from an excess in either direction are fairly presented and the only complaint one has to make is that the guidance of the Church in this important matter seems to be unduly divorced from the excellent advice and information proffered by the lay teachers. That is, save for one very beautiful and pointed-because-unstressed scene in a ruined chapel where a lamp burns before a picture of Our Lady and she seems to be extending her maternal protection over the boy and girl sheltered there from a storm.

The girl delightfully portrayed by a pretty youngster named Anna Maria Pierangelo, cold and unhappy, senses danger in the situation and breathes a prayer to Our Lady. The picture seems

to assume an even more protective attitude as a result of the prayer and the two youngsters eventually fall asleep in charming innocence. The ignorance of the children coupled with the intolerant bigotry of their guardian nearly bring about a tragedy but all ends well.

Mediterranean children are doubtless more naturally mature than our northern youngsters and the situations and circumstances presented in this film are, perhaps, somewhat excessive compared with British standards but the problems treated of are universal and the remedies likewise. It is the duty of parents and teachers, in that order, to see that their children are not left in a superstitious ignorance of God-given faculties. They are to be led to see, according to their need, the essential dignity and beauty of human intercourse based on love of one another as creatures fashioned in the image and likeness of their Maker. They are to be taught that violation of that intercourse for whatever selfish motives is a degradation of something most sublime. The lesson of the film is that neither prudery nor ignorance is a remedy for faults against decency. The root of the cure is understanding and respect based on prayer and restraint.

Needless to say, the photography and the acting is excellent. The children are all naturally photogenic and the sets, for the most part natural, are convincing. Vittorio de Sica, here acting as a change from direction, is a most understanding and sympathetic teacher. Gabriele Dorziat, the accomplished French actress, is terrifying as the bigoted school directress.

This is a film to remind one of childish difficulties and to suggest that memory may be asked to help in sympathising with and wisely directing those who are now going through what we went through long years ago. V.

A New Religious Documentary

THE MASTER CALLETH THEE

Producers: Scriptural Productions.

Director: Andrew Buchanan.

Commentary spoken by Robert Speight and F.M.B.C. **Category:**

C. Running time: 40 minutes.

As far as religious films are concerned we are still in the pioneer period. It is obvious that the commercial film world having no basic interest in the subject of religion save as an idea to be exploited for box-office purposes, has never considered the possibilities of film as a positive aid to Christianity. The pleasing variety from gangsterdom and sensuality provided by films such as *Going My Way*, *Bells of St. Mary's* or *The Keys of the Kingdom*, though they did much to break down certain prejudices with regard to the lives of priests and nuns, were but a variation on the formula of star appeal. They could not be regarded as serious attempts to use the cinema for Christianity.

That field has still to be fully surveyed, but in this country, at least, it can be said that attempts have been made to explore new ground. The series of documentary essays in religious films associated with the names of Andrew Buchanan, Christopher Radley and Charles Desmond Twomey are proof enough that there is both a wide demand for such films and an exciting horizon of cinematic imagination still to be investigated. Of films such as *Visitation*, *Crucifers to Walsingham*, *Out of the Darkness*, *Pilgrimage to Fatima* and *The Faith in Wales* it is possible to say that there are faults in conception and construction; indeed, what film is without blemishes of some kind?—but it can honestly be claimed that these films have opened new ground and that under normal commercial conditions they would never have been made at all.

Now we have another aspect of the religious film offered to us in *The*

Master Calleth Thee. This is a semi-factual presentation, in pageant form, of the theme of vocation to the religious life. Maidenhood, on her journey, seeks to know what she is to do with her life. On the one hand there are the glittering attractions of the world; on the other, a call to mother the Mystical Body of Christ in its myriad forms, whether it be those who need shelter in old age, teaching and nursing in childhood, medical care in sickness, mothering in orphanages, or the sublimest call to comfort Christ in contemplation. More than forty different Orders of Nuns are passed in review by Maidenhood, before she overcomes the siren call of the world and receives her Cross and her Crown at the altar foot.

The film is beautifully photographed by Charles Francis and though the demands of the Daughters of the Mother of Good Counsel whose work it portrays, limits some of the scenes in a rather static manner, it is full of interest and thought-provoking situations and cannot but cause many a young girl to ponder the call of the Master in her own case. This is the purpose of the film and it will, after its premiere run at the Hammer Theatre, Wardour Street, London, on April 9th, 10th and 11th, be taken round the country, with the object of stirring up vocations to the various religious congregations of women.

The commentary is beautifully and movingly delivered by Robert Speight and one of the members of the F.M.B.C. These initials cover a group of women whose special work it is to foster religious vocations. They have made a splendid act of faith in the power of film to move the heart towards the things of God. They have also made a courageous act of confidence in the generosity of the Catholic public both to answer the call of the Master and also to contribute to the cost of the film. It is to be hoped that both these expectations will be amply fulfilled.

J. A. V. B.

C.F.I. NOTES

Regional Film Societies Chester Shows the Way

We are always glad to hear of Catholic film initiatives in the provinces. The latest enterprise is the E.Q. Film Society, which has been organised in Chester under the Presidency of the Bishop of Shrewsbury, the Right Rev. John A. Murphy. Vice-Presidents are the Very Rev. Canon Hugh A. Welch, V.F., and the Very Rev. Father Aidan, O.F.M.Cap. The Organising Secretary is Lieut.-Colonel H. A. A. Howell, M.B.E. The Society has been formed with the approval of the Bishop with the object of presenting in the Chester Area films with a religious or moral background.

The first presentation was at the Tatler Theatre, Foregate Street, Chester on February 25th when the films shown were *Le Sorcier Du Ciel*, the story of the Curé d'Ars, and *Crucifers to Walsingham*. The attendance was most gratifying and there is every hope that this courageous enterprise will have the success it deserves. The next presentation will be on Easter Sunday when the films to be shown will be *Pilgrimage to Fatima* and *Faith in Wales*.

We warmly welcome this new offshoot of Catholic film action and commend it to the attention of other provincial Catholic centres. It is one effectual way to fulfil Pope Pius XI's injunction to "promote good motion pictures". It means hard work and little material reward, but it is worth while doing. It would be grand if we could count on such a centre in every large town or city.

Focus Film Course

Lectures on *The Structure of the Film Industry* and *The Way Films Vary* were given at More House during February by Andrew Buchanan. These are lectures 2 and 3 in the Course which the C.F.I. has organised to be given at More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7, the University House recently opened by the Canonesses of St. Augustine. The Lecturer insisted that an understanding of the economic and

technical structure of the film industry is indispensable to anyone wishing to appreciate the present position of the film as a factor in public life. Talking of the way films vary, Andrew Buchanan, insisted that the topsyturvy financial condition of the industry today made it impossible for religious, educational or children's films to be produced commercially. As far as religious films were concerned, they could only be properly made by an amateur group of professional competence, dedicated to non-commercial production on a non-profit-making basis.

We urge as many of our readers and their friends as possible to attend these lectures. An adequate grasp of the subjects covered by the Course is essential to all those who claim to be competent film critics.

Publicity

We often hear people say that they have never heard of the Catholic Film Institute. This, if true, is very sad. On the other hand, it is a consolation for, when people do hear about us they usually want to help by becoming members and in other ways. We have been publicising ourselves as much as our slender resources will permit for many years and we have also been frequently mentioned in the Catholic Press. Still it is notorious that people do not notice what is mentioned in the papers unless there is a campaign of advertising. This we cannot afford. We have, from time to time, sent printed leaflets through the post to clergy and educational authorities. Unhappily, not always with remarkable success. The little pamphlet *Dare We Ignore The Cinema* went to more than 8,000 priests, convents, schools and colleges. Though it did not produce many results, it was and is a useful means of telling enquirers what we are trying to do. We have wondered whether any of our friends would care to help us by sending a donation to have some more copies of this pamphlet printed. We shall be grateful for any help of this kind which will help to bring our Institute and its work before a wider public.

From Our Educational Panel

FILM STRIPS FOR TEACHING OF MUSIC AND ART

LIBRARIES

C.G.B. Common Ground Ltd., Sidney Place, S.W.7.

Introduction to Sight Singing

By I. Rees-Davies. Part I (35 frames). C.G.B. 140. Price : 15s.

This is a step-by-step method of learning to read at sight. It makes use of the Curwen Tonic-Solfa system with a movable "Doh" to give a thorough training in relative pitch before passing to the idea of fixed pitch at frame 23. Its originality lies in its substitution of squares and rectangles for one-pulse and two-pulse units. This is an exact correlation of sound and symbol, by which the mind is free to experience pulse and pattern without at the same time grappling with our present system of note symbols.

Introduction to Sight Singing

Part II (43 frames). C.G.B. 142. Price : 15s.

The modern system of note symbols for duration of sound is now introduced. As each new symbol is met it is superimposed on the appropriate square or rectangle and when sufficiently familiar is allowed to stand on its own. Reference to the pictorial method of squares is similarly made whenever a new rhythm pattern is introduced.

Careful handling of the material at this point will be necessary if the pupil is not to assume that the crochet is always the unit : but these two strips taken at the rate of a frame for each lesson or even for several lessons would form the nucleus of an attractive and thoroughly practical music course for the Primary School or the first two years of the Secondary School. Part I leads from the first elements of pulse and pitch to the use of the major scale in simple keys. The second part

provides for reading simple melodies in all keys and major and minor and modulation to nearly related keys.

To be used as the author wishes this should be accompanied at least in the early stages by practical handwork. Each pupil makes his own cardboard or wooden stave and coloured units to place on the staff and in this way children in their first year at school could begin to read and "write" music.

Taken at faster pace these two strips could also form an amusing introductory or revision course for adults.

Introduction to Music

By W. G. Williams, B.A., B.Mus., L.R.A.M., Music Organiser, Huddersfield Education Committee.

PART I. C.G.B. 326. NOISE AND MUSICAL NOTES. Price : 15s.

That music is a science far more than an art is not often given thought. Here is an excellent film-strip to prove it and one that offers a field of interest in music for those who have not much ability or opportunity where music making is concerned. The pictures are clear and well chosen to illustrate the thesis that for sound to be produced a vibrating source, a medium and a receptor are required; and hence, that irregular waves cause noise and regular waves mean musical notes. The control of sound is also considered.

Gramophone Record to accompany this strip : C.G.R. 326. Price : 21s.

PART II. C.G.B. 328. PITCH. Price : 15s.

This follows on from the last strip and deals with factors affecting the height and depth of sounds and poses the question of how the exact pitch of sounds may best be plotted both for accuracy and for ease of reading. We

then see that a graph, though accurate, will not be practical for the musician.

PART III. C.G.B. 327. WRITING MUSIC—I. Price : 15s.

Graphic methods having proved too clumsy for the musician, he must now find some other way of transmitting musical thought. The experiments of the Church musicians from the seventh century to the sixteenth are shown. Illustrations are taken from actual manuscripts showing some of the earliest names and then the use of one-line, two-lines, four-lines and six or more lines to a stave. Finally, examples of music for the different orchestral instruments with appropriate clefs are shown and might well be used as an introduction to Score Reading.

PART IV. C.G.B. 329. WRITING MUSIC—II. Price : 15s.

This deals first of all with the building of the Diatonic Major and Minor Key-System and shows the relationship of the flat series and the sharp series to the key-board. Frames 1-16 could therefore be used singly to illustrate lessons or would make a good revision course. The diagrams are clear and quickly grasped. Illustrations from the music of Debussy, Bach and Welsh folk-song are used to illustrate the different flavour of the whole tone scale, the major or minor modes and the pentatone.

Frames 17-39 are an historical survey of the methods of indicating duration of sound from the early attempts to metricise neumes to the comparatively modern looking manuscripts of Henry VIII's composition. Then follows an outline of the modern system of relative note values.

This should be shown in conjunction with Part I.

PART V. C.G.B. 330. SHAPES IN MUSIC. Price : 15s.

This would be a useful introduction to a study of each form in music as it arose or alternatively could be used entirely as a revision and summary of the whole subject. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of any one form but to arouse interest in the ideas of balance and contrast and should be accompanied by plenty of musical illustrations on the piano or

gramophone. Binary Ternary, Rondo, First Movement form, Fugue, Minuet and Trio and the whole Symphony or Sonata are dealt with graphically. Linear, abstract patterns represent the building up of phrases, sentences and movements, and the whole subject is given its proper value at the end by a series of frames showing ensemble and orchestral players and singers at work interpreting well-known masterpieces for us, which, without some technical knowledge of form in music and a feeling for design they could not do.

The notes accompanying these film strips contain lists of works for reference and further reading and of gramophone records for illustration.

Windows

C.G.B. 77. Price : 15s.

"Windows are peculiar deceptive things. We look through them . . . we open them, close them, clean them and break them, but hardly ever look at them and certainly never wonder about them."

These are the opening sentences of the notes and in a spirited and provocative way the subject is treated, not historically or technically, but by showing contrasting principles of window construction in excellent photography accompanied by illuminating notes. We are shown the problems confronting the window designers in ages past and the ways they were solved and developed in modern times. Among the many windows shown are slit windows in a castle, sliding-folding modern windows, the east window of Gloucester Cathedral and a factory window made of glass bricks like a wall. There is included an appendix giving a good historical survey of windows and glass. Altogether a film strip highly recommended for children 15+ though even younger children would find much to interest them.

Houses

C.G.B. 245. Price : 15s.

This strip is only an introduction to the study of houses, giving as it does a bare outline history of the development of the home from prehistoric times to the present day. It is divided into three parts. The first

part takes us from cave dwellings to the fourteenth century (17 frames). The second and the best part of the strip begins with a good simplified geological map of England and Wales and goes on to show the use of local material and the subsequent character given to the buildings in the various localities (10 frames).

"The third section," to quote the Introduction, "brings the development up to the present time showing outstanding types of the various periods and finally the present day improvements in the housing conditions of the lower classes." This is attempting too much in nine frames, but the strip is interesting and as an introduction or as a quick revision of work done it is useful.

Introduction to Perspective

F.B. 631. Fralex. (Common Ground.)
Price : 15s.

The subject is treated by photography and diagrams. The photography is good, especially that of the village streets, and the houses are well used to illustrate the desired points of perspective. The diagrams are not very clear, and the commentary is dull and heavy. It is a pity that the elipse was included as it had to be treated so summarily. Though it is suggested that children of 11 years would be interested, this strip is not for beginners and the age suitability is 15 plus.

Plant Drawing

Part I. F.B. 630. Fralex. (Common Ground.) Price : 15s.

For anyone teaching or about to teach plant drawing this is a most useful strip. The use of paper sculpture to teach form is well justified and should encourage others to attempt this method of exposition. The notes are particularly good and many useful hints are given; these together with the most attractive photography—certainly the work of an artist—make this strip one to be recommended.

Lino Cuts

F.B. 629. Fralex. (Common Ground.)
Price : 15s.

This is definitely a strip for children who have attained a proficiency in drawing technique as the examples of lino-cut land-scapes done by 11 to 14-year-olds are technically very competent. All show careful drawing and planning beforehand. Possibly vigour and originality are lost by not cutting more directly on to the block.

The early examples are not very attractive though they serve to illustrate points in composition and in the balance of white, black and greys. All, however, can learn from the many good points made in the subsequent examples cut by the compiler, and from the remarks on contrasting treatments, spacing of tones and on the suggestion of mood and atmosphere.

DOCUMENTARY

FAMILY PORTRAIT

Running time: 25 minutes.

This is a fair to middling documentary (the last completed work of the late Humphrey Jennings) designed to tell the story of our small islands. In fact Scotland is only hinted at in a vague sort of way and the story wears the straight jacket of a very narrow conception of what goes to make the history of a people. St. Thomas More is not mentioned nor is there anything said about Oxford and Cambridge for example. It is impossible to avoid the impression that the producers and writers involved consider the high

point of our story to have been reached when the Forth Bridge was built and that what they want to tell the world is that our blast furnaces are as good as theirs. It is not likely that any of our visitors will want to go anywhere near that particular type of achievement—most of them can outbest us anyway. What they want to know is who we are and how it all came about. That is a difficult sort of story to tell in a film but it is the best part of our story and the telling ought to have been attempted. The commentary is a trifle refined and bored in sound, but will be altered to ensure American consumption.

J. C.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

Having lately read the report of the C.F.I. Second Annual General Meeting, I would like to add my comments to two of the subjects of discussion which cropped up at the meeting, namely Focus and interesting the Catholic population at large in the work of the Institute.

The second can be done largely with the help of the first—and here the degree of attractiveness of Focus counts enormously. I thought this month's number was sub-standard—there was not the usual presentation of one of the better films of the month with accompanying photos. Could not this have been done with *Kim*, for instance. Admittedly, the films reviewed in this number are not a brilliant selection. Secondly, I felt that the photos accompanying "American Memories" were not very good—especially as two of them were nearly the same. Generally, the critiques of films appear too jumbled up together, which is the fault of the two columned layout. Couldn't the films be classified: detective, musical, comedy, etc.? I agree with Mr. David Murphy's view that more illustrations are needed. I am sure some artist would like to head the Film Review section with a design illustrating "Our Panel of Priests".

As regards spreading interest in the work of the Institute, I feel a lot could be done by the formation of small parish film clubs which would ensure films advertised by and made by the C.F.I. were shown in the particular parishes. Whereas Focus can be advertised very advantageously if someone takes one of those copies usually to be found lingering in the pamphlet store, and pins it up on some board, open at the page where is to be

found a review and stills of a film being shown locally.

Yours sincerely,

N. C. COLLINS.

Collège de Garçons,
Dieppe.

Sir,

I would be most grateful if you would state in your next issue at what age your "Adolescent" grading begins. This would stop argument as to whether it is before or after a child leaves school and make the grading far more useful to parents. May I draw your attention to *Treason* being given a "U" certificate by mistake in your issue whereas it is an "A" because of the torture scenes, about which parents need some indication or I would not mention it.

I am, etc.,

HENRIETTA BOWER.

(Adolescence, the period between childhood and the adult life, is regarded by most people as 12—17 years for girls and 14—18 for boys. We all know, of course, that some children grow up quicker than others.—EDITOR.)

Fatima Film Shows

Sir,

A further point arises in connection with the collection taken at the Davis Theatre, Croydon. It has been pointed out that, in addition to the £142 collected, 50 worth of the Fatima Film Book were sold. However this, of course, is not to be understood as an addition to the total profit since the books have already been paid for and their sale helps to defray the money already expended on their printing.

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET MOULTRIE,
Hon. Treasurer, C.F.I.

Cover

Personality

Anne Baxter

I have often wondered what sort of hidden treasure is sought by those nebulous but all important Hollywood people who are called Talent Scouts.

On occasions it has seemed as if the Talent Scouts were really a wolf pack, men dedicated to the conviction that what defines a woman is the long low whistle she evokes in a certain type of man. Their discerning eye has found for the public heroes who beat their women and seductive sirens without any brains. But sometimes they rise above the secondary sex characters and find us an actress.

This is what happened with Anne Baxter in 1939. The boys really found an actress.

Controlled Emotion

If you saw her in *All About Eve* you must remember her, and to be remembered when you play opposite Bette Davis is only possible for an actress indeed. Miss Davis has a wonderful set of emotions. She seems to have the emotions of all the women you have ever known. She is feline, luxuriant, unstable, kind hearted, unbalanced, loving and spiteful with hardly a pause between. Her emotionally charged intelligence gives her a royal canvas, and she gives you a vivid and flamboyant performance in that picture of the snares that wait for spoiled

career women. With cold ruthlessness Miss Baxter gives the complementary portrait. In her case it is all done with intelligently controlled emotion. As time goes on you loathe her more and more; she is selfishness coming out of solution, crystallising at just the right moment in the film. The timing, intelligence and realism of her performance is completely convincing. Only afterwards you realise that no woman could be as spiteful, relentless and unscrupulous as that.

She picked up an Academy Award in 1946 for her performance in *The Razor's Edge*. She was also the sweet young woman in *Sunday Dinner for a Soldier*.

For those who like snippets about their stars, it can be said that she will be twenty-eight next May and weighs just under a cwt. She will also be worth her weight in gold to any good director whose horizons are wider than those of the Talent Scouts.

Her Versatility

She loves music—good swing, such French moderns as Debussy and Ravel; Sibelius, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Gershwin.

She is also interested in art. Her favourites cover a wide range such as Gaughin, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton.

Her favourite modern authors are John Steinbeck, Thomas Wolfe and Thornton Wilder.

She likes to swim and ride horseback in a western saddle. Her hobby is food. She likes not only to collect but execute rare recipes. She spends her spare time searching out good and unusual places in which to eat. She has another hobby too, if it can be classed as such—the practically lost art of walking, particularly where she can see and study various types of people.

She is married to John Hodiak, who was her co-star in *Sunday Dinner for a Soldier*.

MICHAEL ANTONY.

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National Film Reviewing Office

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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Hon. Secretary:

REV. JOHN A. V. BURKE, 157 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

MAY 1951

No. 5

FILM ARTISTS

Artists like priests are important people. For this reason they are the first to be gagged and silenced by the dictators of totalitarian states.

Priests are important, not by virtue of any inherent qualities they possess (as men they may be less than the rest of men), but because they possess power to change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ; because they possess power to administer sacraments; because they possess authority to preach a doctrine not of this world, which reveals visions of the kingdom of heaven. Priests are doubly important today when so many minds are being "conditioned" and frozen stiff by the icy doctrine of materialism.

Artists are important, not because of any personal qualities they possess (as men they may be less than the rest of men), but because they possess gifts which widen and lengthen the horizons of men's minds and free their spirits to roam beyond the confines of matter. Art is the handmaid of religion and every Christian artist who is true to his vocation, which is "to reveal", can prepare the way for the coming of God's kingdom on earth.

Although film is the latest of the arts, it is not the least of the arts. No man in his right senses would contend that film is the greatest of the arts; but he would be a rash man who would deny that it is the most popular of the arts and the most patronised.

It is because the art of the film is so popular, is enjoyed and understood by the many, that the Christian film-artist of today has such magnificent opportunities and such tremendous responsibilities.

The Christian film-artist of today has the power to make such films as will pierce through the iron curtains of totalitarianism and free men from the tyranny of materialism. In the years to come we shall be either bond or free.

It may be said that priests and artists work for the same ends on different levels. Priests operate in the field of the supernatural. Artists operate in the field of the natural. Their vocations run along parallel lines (earth is inter-penetrated with heaven) in such wise they can meet and bring to men peace, freedom and happiness.

EDITOR.

At the Film Festival in Uruguay

By Freda Bruce Lockhart

One of the first people I met at Punta del Este, after flying over six thousand miles to attend the first film festival in Uruguay, was André Ruszkowski, the indefatigable secretary-general of the O.C.I.C. I was delighted to see him there, not only for the pleasure of finding an old friend so far from home, but also because his presence was an encouraging symptom of the growing firmness of the Catholic footing in the film world.

Last year in Venice I stayed at the same hotel as the O.C.I.C. jury at the Festival; previously I had met an O.C.I.C. jury at the Belgian Festival. Somehow I had not expected to find the O.C.I.C. so taken for granted, an established part of the proceedings, so far on the other side of the world. It was a very pleasant surprise; still more so, and an honour too, when M. Ruszkowski asked me to be a member of the jury. We were then: three Uruguayans, a Mexican, an Italian, Ruszkowski and myself.

People are inclined to pour scorn on these festivals as tourist rackets or holiday treats for critics. There was some temptation to regard the Punta del Este festival as a picnic, for the hospitality was exuberant and inexhaustible. In my opinion there is quite a strong case to be made for Festivals, apart from my own enjoyment. Anything which enhances the prestige of good films is a benefit to the cinema, and festival juries are almost always responsible enough to do that, however much one may disagree with their verdicts. In addition it is a benefit as well as a pleasure for those who stalk the jungle of the studios to meet people from other countries who take films seriously. It is an especial pleasure, of course, to meet Catholic film-

workers from other countries and one of the pleasantest of all the lavish entertainments in Uruguay was a simple tea-party given by a prominent local Catholic for June Haver and the members of the O.C.I.C. jury. Speaking strictly for myself, it was also salutary to find this actress, whom I had candidly always regarded as just another technicolor - musical blonde, to be such a truly sweet and charming and serious young person.

Even more encouraging than the presence of the O.C.I.C. jury (which perhaps ought not to have been so unexpected after all) was the Catholic climate of the films shown. Not that Uruguay has not its fair share of anti-clericalism, even anti-Catholicism; I was told that the founder many years ago of the governing party (which has been in power for over half a century) had to turn against the Church for the same reason as our Henry VIII—he wanted a divorce to marry a lady not his wife. It was open talk that the findings of the Festival Jury would be affected by the fact that Catholics in it were the minority. Of course, there is always talk about a jury's awards, but it seemed plausible that some such division might account for the compromise choice of a mediocre film, like the Italian *Domani e Troppo Tardi*, which would hurt nobody, as the prize winner, rather than either a film like *La Ronde*, which could give scandal to the religious element, or one with a specifically Catholic subject like *Cielo Sulla Palude*, the story of Saint Maria Goretti, which got the next most votes after the winner.

Winners and juries apart, what I meant by the Catholic climate of the films shown was the unmistakable sense of being in a Latin and Catholic climate instead of in a Northern and Protestant one. It was not a question

of occasional films waving nuns or priests to attract the supposed Catholic or religious market or to cash in on a fashionable cycle. Quite the reverse. It was the sense that in the majority of films from the participating Latin countries—from Mexico, Brazil, Italy and even France, as represented here—it was perfectly clear that the characters were normally Catholics: they turned into church to pray, said grace before meals, crossed themselves, were buried according to Catholic rite and custom. A fortnight of this can give you a quite extraordinarily different slant on the cinema and its possibilities.

Of the films of positive Catholic content, the principal novelty and attraction was the French film of Bernanos' *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, directed by Robert Bresson. I am ashamed to confess that I found myself drowsing through a great deal of this; but that should not be taken altogether as a comment on the film, it was rather a weakness of the flesh to survive the combination of small-hours-of-the night hospitality with midnight film shows. There is, however, a certain slow monotony about the film itself of which I saw enough to detect, I think, the fundamental flaw. The men who made this film, it seems to me, have been afraid even while they have been bold; while they have dared to discuss on the screen spiritual matters, subtle inward spiritual struggles never before tackled on the screen, they have not dared to trust the cinema to tackle them. The subtleties, the profundities are in the script, in the commentary which consists of extracts from the journal, words used in a purely literary way; the images, however exquisitely photographed, are only illustrations to the words. Adding to the monotony is the voice of the young actor who plays the curé. He might have been most moving in a silent version, but lacks the expert skill which alone could have given vocal colour and light and shade to the commentary. As a result, with all its words the film is scarcely as eloquent spiritually as Dreyer's silent *Passion de Jehane D'Arc*.

Nevertheless the *Curé de Campagne*, even if it does not quite come off, is

a noble and notable failure. I sincerely hope English Catholics will soon have a chance to see and judge it for themselves; and I shall certainly go to see it again.

Cielo Sulla Palude was reviewed by FOCUS last year and is even more overdue to be shown here. I found this sombre but inspiring film immensely impressive, both as film-making and as an introduction to a saint. Maria Goretti's story is not an easy one to tell, but the director, Genina, has overcome all difficulties by telling it always as a film; whether in his use of space and light in the long trek across the marshes, of urgent movement in scenes where the saint is tormented by her pursuer, isolated by him from her mother, of crowd grouping in the serene death-scene, he achieves complete integrity of subject and scene, of form and content.

Besides these two pictures the Uruguayan Festival was shown *Prima Comunione*, the Italian comedy in which Aldo Fabrizi goes through the anxieties of a father the day before his daughter's First Communion. It had been intended also to show *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes*, the O.C.I.C.'s last year's winner of the prize at Venice, but that was one of the unfulfilled hopes. Nevertheless if Catholic representation at festivals continues to grow at this pace, we shall one day be able to contemplate a Catholic Film Festival.

Cielo Sulla Palude had already won the O.C.I.C. award and so was not eligible again in Uruguay; nor was *Scott of the Antarctic* which had already won a mention. In the circumstances the O.C.I.C. jury in Uruguay gave the award to *Intruder in the Dust*. Announcing the award at the closing ceremony, the chairman stressed that it was not only for the film's attitude to racial persecution, but for its advocacy of individual responsibility; and he noted also its artistic values. *Intruder in the Dust*, directed by Clarence Brown, was another film I found as noble in its execution as in conception and one I imagine Catholics will feel proud to see commended by the O.C.I.C.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 5: *Films and Vocations*

By

Declan Flynn, O.F.M.

Santa Barbara, surrounded on three sides by richly wooded canyons, is a picturesque resort in California, poised between the radiant waters of the Pacific Ocean and the mysterious-looking, rhythmic, sloping Santa Ynes (St. Agnes) mountains. There is a purity of atmosphere and beauty about Santa Barbara, it is so full of colour, light and bird-song, that it has become a natural habitat for painters, poets, writers and other artists whose business it is to express ideas in colour, line or sound.

You could believe that Barbara the beautiful, the highly-intelligent young lady who suffered martyrdom at the hands of her own father, rather than forswear the Christian Faith, guards this town where flowers of varied and vibrant colours festoon the houses; where blossoms like mosaics pave the paths; where the music of the old mission bell recalls the triumph of the old Faith.

"The drift of pinions, would we hearken, beats at our clay-shuttered doors."

The old Franciscan Mission, the tenth to be founded (1786) and the most complete of them all, is one of the most attractive features of Santa Barbara. It comprises a low, long line of cream-coloured buildings with arched corridors in the centre of which arises a twin-towered church with pale pink ionic pilasters which sparkle in

the sun. On the edge of the lawn athwart the open road a beautifully carved fountain sprinkles its benediction; nearby, under the spreading branches of two friendly sycamore trees, planted by a thoughtful padre to give shelter from the sun, you notice an old trough in which beneath a canopy of cool leaves the Indian-converts did their washing.

In the little cemetery, to the right, 4,000 Indians lie side by side with 500 whites; a crumbling vault, still in use, entombs the dead padres (the friars in these parts are called padres), who are placed like books in shelves. Here you can read the story of a devoted band of missionaries which never surrendered to the enemy; which refused to accept secularisation; which when expelled refused to obey. Among them lies the remains of a padre who is the saintly Fr. Salvierderra of Helen Hunt Jackson's famous novel "Ramona".

Pattern of His Plans

It was in the pleasant precincts of the Santa Barbara mission that I began to ponder on the mystery of vocation. How I came to fall into such meditative mood happened this way . . .

I was met at Santa Barbara station by my friend Fr. Donal McHugh who is all kindness and courtesy. A car awaited me, at the wheel of which was seated another friar merrily sketching.

A few hours later, while wandering in the quadrangle of the old mission imbibing its peace and history, the friar who was at the wheel handed me an excellent sketch in which I, all hot and dusty, was being greeted by a barefooted friar who was looking cool and elegant. When, later on, I commented on the skill of the laybrother artist, I was told that not so long ago he was working with Walt Disney in his studio at Hollywood.

While in New York I had met a most delightful laybrother, Br. John, a man of about forty who also had been called from films to friary. I knew, too, about (since I have checked up on details) Jose Mojica, the operatic tenor of international fame and film star who also was "called" to become a Franciscan friar. On the other hand, I had met several people in England and America who have told me that they believed that they had been "placed into" the film world and were working therein with a real sense of vocation. This criss-cross manner in which the Creator seems to weave the

pattern of His plans fascinated me and made me realise that there are many mansions in my Father's house where a man can fulfil his vocation.

Is there such a thing as a film-vocation? It would seem that there is.

Canticle Films

In Los Angeles, for example, a non-Catholic gentleman, Mr. Koster, called at the friary to see me. He was a lawyer and businessman in a successful way who one day awakened to the fact that the world was going to the devil and decided to help to do something about it; he was convinced that the "movies" (in America the words films and cinema are never used) could play a creative part in restoring men to Christ and bring lasting peace to the world, wherefore he gave up law and put every penny he possessed into a film-production unit: Canticle Films, the purpose of which is to operate in the 16mm. field and produce films of a good moral, technical and artistic quality that will influence public

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opinion. *Upon this Rock* is the title of his first film which is made in kodacrome. It is the life of Christ seen through the eyes of St. Peter. I was unable to see the film but I gather that it is a very moving piece of work. Mr. Koster takes his film from parish to parish and works on a fifty-fifty basis. He supplies the film and the projector, the parish priest supplies the hall and the audience, they split the profits and both parties are pleased. The Guardian at the friary at Los Angeles where I was staying had booked the film for a week.

I was pleased to see that this film has been noticed in the current issue of "Revue Internationale du Cinema" as an example of non-Catholic interest in the cinema. I think Mr. Koster might be willing to exchange his film for a copy of our film *Pilgrimage to Fatima*.

Film-Apostle

While in Los Angeles I met another film-apostle, Bob MacMahon. He is a lawyer who in his spare time operates a small unit of Catholic laymen who also confine their interest to the 16mm. field. Mr. MacMahon as a lawyer, holds a secure position, but he is seriously thinking of giving it up to go into films as a full-time job, not to make money (he knows he will lose money), but for the cause of Christianity. He told me that since his college days he felt that he had a vocation to work in the film world for the honour and glory of God. Like Andrew Buchanan he believes that the day is approaching when there will be a religious Order dedicated to making films for Christian purposes. Mr. MacMahon did all he could to get people in Hollywood interested in our film: *Pilgrimage to Fatima*.

There are too many politicians, propagandists and tub-thumpers in the world of today and too few poets and artists. There is a place in the world today for Christian film artists to draw aside the dark veils of materialism and reveal the wonders of Christianity. Christian film-artists have it in their power to sow such seeds of thought as will liberate the spirit of man from the tyranny of the false "isms" which, like chains, have imprisoned men's minds.

I would say that there is such a thing as a film-vocation. Many men have been called to be apostles of the pen. I think it was Père Lacordaire who said "I will remain crucified to my pen". The men of the past who wielded the pen would—if they were alive today—make full use of the cinema.

Fascinating Story

Since I began this article I have been fortunate enough to meet a friend of Jose Mojica who passed through London on his way to Rome. When I asked him if all the things said about him were true he smiled and said "What are you sceptical about?" "Those bits about the roses," I replied. He laughed out loud and assured me that they were true.

Mojica

The story of Jose Mojica who left the footlights to become a friar is a fascinating one. He was born of poor parents in the small town of St. Gabriel in the Mexico State of Jalisco. He became known as "the boy with the voice of an angel". He received some sort of education in a military school in Mexico but it did not get him anywhere for as a young man we find him washing dishes in a restaurant in Times Square, New York. One day, above the clatter of the dishes, a Mexican diner heard a golden voice coming from the kitchen. He asked to be introduced to the singer. As a result of that interview Jose was signed with a musical company touring U.S.A. He did so well on this tour that he was given a contract with the Chicago Grand Opera Company. He soon found glory in most European countries. When only 36 years of age Jose had found success, money, popularity, the pleasure of a great name, but he had not found happiness. "There was," he says, "a void in my heart." It was while reading the life of a Franciscan in preparation for a part he was playing in a film called *The Sword and the Cross* that he discovered—for him—peace of mind and soul would be found in a Franciscan friary. His mother who was dependent upon him was alive so he did the next best thing to becoming a friar: he became a member of the Third Order of St.

Francis, and bided his time. In the meantime he built a school for poor boys and staffed it with Franciscan Sisters. His mother died in 1941 but he was not free to join the Franciscan Order because he was under contract to go to Buenos Aires to make a film called *Melodies of America*. On his way to the Argentine he stopped at the friary of Arequipa and sought permission to enter as a laybrother when he had completed his film contract.

What Jose calls "the happiest day of his life" came a year later when he received the habit of a Franciscan laybrother. But Jose was not destined for the hidden life. His provincial asked him to study for the priesthood. Among his fellow-students Jose was always merry and bright and regaled them with songs and stories; but inwardly he was suffering torments so much so that his black hair became white and he lost three stones in weight. He felt completely unworthy to become a priest. He decided to leave the novitiate. But first he

prayed in a child-like way to St. Teresa of Lisieux: "If you want me to be a priest, have one of the other novices bring me a red rose." Strange (and yet not so strange!) a novice brought Jose a red rose. "I've just been in the garden and thought you might like this rose."

Jose was a man of sense. He thought this might be just coincidence. Again he prayed to St. Teresa: "If you really want me to be a priest have one of the novices bring me a red carnation and a white rose." A few minutes later a novice brought him a bouquet of carnations and red roses. "Jose, this is Mexico's independence day so I've brought you the colours of your country." Jose was convinced. Today, Jose Mojica is a Franciscan priest. The powers that be allow him to sing on the stage in the habit of St. Francis for charity concerts and for the good of the Church.

This is Jose's story in brief, but it is sufficient to emphasise the point of this article.

PENNY A DAY FOR 240 DAYS

If one fourth of the Catholic population in England and Scotland contributed a penny a day for 240 days, the Catholic Film Institute in England would be able to set up a production unit.

To date £250 has been contributed which has been expended in part payment of the films *Rome of the Pilgrims* and *Crucifers to Walsingham*. There are many other religious subjects waiting to be treated if only we can obtain the money. It was the pennies of the Catholic population in France which made possible the making of the film *Monsieur Vincent*.

Please send a donation to Rev. J. A. V. Burke, 357 Beulah Hill, London, S.E.19.

Catholic Film Institute

No. 1: Aims and Objects

It remains one of the perennial needs to explain to faintly scandalised hearers that the priests who are occupied with propagating Catholic ideas about the cinema have, in fact, not only the approval of their Hierarchy, but also that this approval derives from the Holy See itself. One good lady actually went so far, some years ago, as to say that priests who went to cinema studios or who frequented film press-shows were aiding and abetting those whose profession was the committing of mortal sin by means of the cinema! Granted that this is an extreme example, there are many whose idea of the cinema is restricted to extravagant publicity items spread abroad in the popular newspapers.

A further point that cannot be too often stressed is that film is capable of positively good uses. Accustomed as we are in these days to the misuse of words and the narrowing down of ideas conveyed by certain words, it is an astonishing thing to note how even those whose education should have prepared them to look beyond the popular meaning attached to words, will accept without reflection the arbitrary restriction of such words as "recreation", "entertainment", "art" or "morals". Further, the notion that one need only divest the cinema of morally objectionable elements for it to be "safe" for general patronage is a dangerously materialistic one. Pope Pius XI in his film encyclical writes that "Recreation . . . must be worthy of the rational nature of man and therefore must be morally healthy". The two things go together. When films are completely lacking in ideas that could attract an intelligent being for ten minutes it is pernicious to have them labelled as satisfactory for general consumption. There is far too much justification of "escapist" entertainment. People say that they go to the films "to get away from it all", to "forget their drab everyday lives". Excellent, so long as the thing they escape to is worthy of the rational nature of man. It is erroneous,

however, to suppose that people can be present at a film show in which their minds are left virgin of impressions, good or bad. As Pius XI says, "Even the crudest and most primitive minds which have neither the capacity nor the desire to make the efforts necessary for abstraction or deductive reasoning are captivated by the cinema".

It is sabotaging to basic moral teaching to allow that Catholics may satisfactorily be present at film shows which are an insult to the intelligence. To wish to be entertained, to seek recreation is a good thing, but it is to ignore the exalted nature and destiny of man to forget that even when we are enjoying legitimate recreation, we have to be contributing in some small measure to the purpose of the Creator. That is why our lightest amusement should, in some way, be *re-creative*, not merely *escapist*.

The fact that, as Pope Pius XI says, the motion picture is viewed by people in a semi-hypnotic condition of darkened hall and lighted screen, with mental, physical and often spiritual faculties relaxed, places a special responsibility upon the Christian. Since it is the most ubiquitous form of modern diversion, and since the average commercial film is sub-human in its intellectual appeal, the cinema presents a challenge to much that the Church regards as worthy of the rational nature of man.

The Catholic Film Institute believes that, in spite of the gross misuse of the invention of cinematography, it is also capable of contributing to the well-being of man. Not only in the production of frankly religious films, a department which, incidentally, is grievously neglected, but also in the production of commercial films destined for public entertainment. Pope Pius XI was not necessarily thinking of positively religious films when he wrote, "Good motion pictures are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see

them". The effect of films such as *San Francisco*, in which Spencer Tracy's priest was a live, real man of God, or *The Sullivans*, in which the large, Catholic family is so normal and so good, or even *Brief Encounter*, in which an example of the ease with which an illicit situation can develop and the realism with which it must be faced and handled, is not without its lesson for thoughtful Catholics, such films are capable of contributing something more than amusement or entertainment: they are truly "recreative".

Contained within the phrasing of our first aim, therefore, is a vision of the motion picture as a God-given means of perfecting the human personality, which is, Pope Pius XI remarks, the *raison d'être* of all art. With its special power of harnessing light, that most enchanting of all God's creations, so as to bring within the range of our localised sight events and personalities quite outside our experience, it can do for us what no other medium of art can do. "It speaks by means of vivid and concrete imagery which the mind takes in with enjoyment and without fatigue."

Aware that, as is the case with all other mediums of artistic expression, the cinema will not always be used by highly gifted practitioners; that there will be the second and third-rate

makers of films, we feel that we are not asking too much when we demand that the general run of film offered to the public reach at least the levels of decency and intelligent form which a civilised nation would not blush to have shown as typical of its culture.

Such an enlightened state of cinematic art requires an equally enlightened patronage of cinematic art. In other words, until and unless there is a sufficiently large and informed body of people capable of appreciating the best that film can provide, the force of moral and cultural gravity will keep it chained to its present deplorable level.

We are confident enough in the art of film to think that it is worth while continuing to hammer away at Catholic public opinion. One day we shall see, as a matter of course, films which are a compliment to man's Christian heritage and his artistic and moral integrity. It is a long way ahead, this vision, and there are a large number of very indifferent people to be converted. But the alternative is to leave the cinema in the hands of those who have no concern for the sons of God. That would be a great blasphemy: the use of light to bring darkness over man's soul. "In Thy light shall we see light."

JOHN A. V. BURKE.

Catholic Theatre Guild

Readers of Focus will remember that the Catholic Film Institute has been hoping for a long time to organise some kind of Guild which would bring together those members of the cinema industry who are Catholics. A move has now been made to revive the old Catholic Stage Guild on a wider and more democratic basis and this will include all that we had thought of as useful for the Catholic members of the studios. In fact, the temporary Committee set up at the request of the authorities at Archbishop's House, Westminster, has fixed on the provisional title, Catholic Theatre Guild, so that membership may be open

to all who work in theatre, radio, cinema and the allied arts.

Chairman of the temporary Committee is Mr. Ted Kavanagh and the members include: Miss Mary O'Farrell, Miss Marie Ney, Mr. Robert Speaight, Mr. David Peel, Mr. Michael Brooke, Mr. Alan Rye and Father Joseph O'Hear.

Members of whatever department of any of the entertainment professions are invited to write for particulars to Mr. Alan Rye, c/o Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane, W.C.2. Further details of the development of this most interesting and necessary enterprise will be given in a later issue of this magazine.

The Film and the Mind

By ALAN KEENAN, O.F.M.

The Power of the Visual Aid

You may see a car crash in five seconds. It will take you five minutes to describe it to your friends, and you may describe it very well, but a single photograph in tomorrow's paper will beggar your description.

Now a synthetic sequence of photographs giving the illusion of movement is what constitutes a film. Words describe events for you: but films make those events into pictures. You become the characters of a story: the eyewitness of events, for no other medium of instruction can compare with the visual technique. It is a fact that in acquiring information about anything people prefer vision to any other sense.

When you read a book, word by word the imagination builds its mosaic. It is a good book and the characters come alive. They live in your imagination and with effort they will live again. A film of that book, however, must acquire a new sense of reality. You have not got to imagine that the characters say this or that, they do it before your eyes: the screen does all the work for you, and it does it with realism. No calipers are fine enough to measure the thickness of the film on the screen, but you are chasing crooks through dockland or dodging Indian arrows in a prairie schooner.

Not only does a film give you a vivid sequence of ready-made and technically fine images; it will very often supply you with a sequence of ready-made emotions as well. The actors are good actors: capable of enlisting your sympathy, your love or your hatred. All you have to do is accept them, and since you have gone to the cinema for

entertainment you will probably do that anyway. Moreover, you do not have to perform any mental work while you watch the screen. Your mind had to work when you read the book; and you could always put the book down and think about it; but the film does not stop—it is a synthetic sequence. You can be as passive as a dreamer and as helpless as an eyewitness. You can be; but you need not be.

We must accept the possibility that with practically no expenditure of mental energy, and no labour in imagination, without emotional effort and little but passivity, one can be entertained by a million dollar epic which costs us half a crown. For these reasons and for others, some good and some bad, a remarkably large proportion of the population goes to the cinema about once a week.

The Validity of Escape

There are better reasons for going to the cinema frequently than those given above, but the above are not bad reasons and they are valid, and I do not think we should regard them as invalid because they are not noble enough. Every film-goer escapes from something into what he sees on the screen. What he sees should be something worth escaping into, but we are not, for the moment, discussing the quality of the escape, only its necessity. Some release from urban and industrial monotony is necessary, and at the level of this discussion a number of people escape through the fantasy of film; as they used to do it through the medium of the music-hall, or through the leathery smell of an Edwardian hansom; as they still do, through the medium of a Southend

excursion, or a trip to the local round the corner. Obviously habitual escape from what we should be doing is indefensible, but we are not talking about surfeits. A surfeit of pictures is bad in the same way that a surfeit of alcohol is bad. In moderation it is a stimulant; in excess it is a narcotic. Virtue always resides in the mean, with the exception of the theological virtues; and I cannot see why drinking and film-going any less than eating and being merry should not be virtues if they are done in moderation for the glory of God.

The Quality of the Means of Escape

Accepting the validity of the practically universal social habit of going to the pictures, we can now consider a distinct thing, namely the quality of pictures that people see. Films are made by men with box-office minds. Some of the producers will have more than box-office in mind. They will be in the film trade not only for money, or not even for money, but because they are also artists or men with moral purposes. But the loftier the mind the more it must think of box-office. Studios have got to be paid, distributors have to be found, money must come from somewhere to cover the high costs of production, art or morals must come in a way that will excite people to pay to see it. Otherwise no art comes and no message through the film is possible. It follows that production has to be governed by the simple law of demand. It follows that the producer is not solely responsible for the film he produces: the public is responsible as well. The type of film the producer makes, will be the type the people want.

It seems to me that the mass entertainments of any nation validly mirror its culture or lack of culture, its morals or lack of morals, its intellect or lack of intellect in just as valid a way as its arts, its industries, its churches and its books. The kind of films we have and like is the mirror of the kind of people we are and want to be. The Odeons of the modern world do not seem to be less valid mirrors than the Colosseums of ancient Rome. I pass no judgment on the sort of age we are: the mirrors may be

inspected by others who can examine the reflections and see, perchance, whether their faces are among the multitudes.

Some comments are relevant if judgments are not. It seems incontrovertible that the safest box-office factor is degraded sex, more or less according as the Hays Office or the Censors will allow. A low budget film with a spicy blonde is always a good investment. The film need not be very good, it need not be any good, it can be dark and dingy; but no matter how dingy it is some people will always go for the same reasons that some people go for walks in the dark and dingy streets of Soho. Other films secure their financial foundations by appealing in more or less degree to some of the other foundation passions in the human race. Women beaters, thugs, rapers and monsters titivate tired passions and mirror the flight of the soul. Very few films are exclusively that, for censorship reasons, but they may include brief moments of eroticism; and the fact that they do sometimes occur, even if they occur only in films marked "X", is sufficient

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justification for considering some of the defences the mind might acquire.

The Defences of the Mind

It is sometimes claimed that film-going stultifies thought because it spoon-feeds the imagination and robs the mind of creative impulse. This need not be so, although it may be so for some individuals. The reasons why it can be so have been touched upon. In fairness, however, we must remember that the film is a two edged sword. If it can stultify the imagination by doing its work; it can move the imagination to construct and create by the force of stimulation. If sometimes it gives wrong views of reality; at other times it gives unsuspected views of reality, views that correct, views that educate; that inspire and even sanctify those with eyes prepared to see.

Such a vision is surely possible if one's speculative reason, or power of rational criticism, is kept alive. The values, if they are values, at the base of some films should be inspected and comprehended. The happiest life is not necessarily the one lived in a Bel Air Chateau, and love is surely more than a streamlined seduction of a brazen blonde for the price of a mink stole. Some men do exist without psychiatry and "Chanel" does not eliminate the odour of original sin. One's practical reason, or conscience has equally its canons of beauty, and these need not sleep either.

Another way of putting this is to say that the best way to see any film is to see it as a Catholic, for the Catholic shares in the vision of the Church, which is the vision of Christ and therefore the finest aesthetic in the world. This aesthetic says that all material things in greater or lesser degree mirror the Infinite Beauty which made them. If the film mirrors life it reflects it beautifully if no offence is done to that Ancient Beauty who pitched His tent among us and shared our flesh. That Beauty is the splendour of order and the reflection of that order is what might humbly be sought for, when we go to the cinema. We shall see some things which are beautiful but none of them will have the fullness of beauty if they insult or exclude the archetypal Beauty of which they are the finite expression.

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THE DIRECTOR

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

It often seems to me as if the entire human race is composed of people who either want to be film stars or film directors, the most enthusiastic always being those who know least about either calling. Discovering budding stars is not my vocation, I am relieved to say, but for many years people have been asking me how they can become film directors. Usually, they have no qualifications, the idea having got around that a director doesn't need any. How, then, *does* one begin? There is no recognised course of study—no main road—and there is also no short cut. Successful directors have begun as scenarists, dramatists, journalists, stage producers, cameramen, film editors. One may be any or none of these, but in addition, one must obtain first-hand experience of film-making in a studio, or with a documentary unit, learning everything possible of the various technical processes involved, for the director has to co-ordinate the work of numerous technical specialists, and this he could not do if ignorant of their activities. The first essential, therefore, is to possess an all-round knowledge of production technicalities. The second is to be blessed with the right characteristics—the kind of personality capable of influencing others without seeming to dominate them. A great many highly technical people who began by aspiring to film direction realise after long production experience that they lack the human qualities essential in a good director.

One cannot classify such invisible gifts; they vary considerably, but generally speaking, the director needs a wide and deep knowledge of human nature—insight. He must be the sort of person capable of putting others at their ease. He must be calm in a crisis—and there's at least one every day in film-making! And he must be unusually systematic. In a sentence, therefore, he must combine the vision and sensitive nature of an artist with

first class technical and administrative ability.

You have already learnt how and why scenes are produced out of story order so that all action taking place in each particular setting may be filmed on consecutive days. This jig-saw approach makes it necessary for the director to visualise every fragment of action in its final correct place—so that it shall fit perfectly. Imagine the chaos if he was scatter-brained.

The director is the unseen star. He is reflected in the players whom he inspires. All their movements and vocal inflections are instructed by him. Naturally, they need to have complete confidence in him if they are going to allow him to mould them so completely, which means he must begin by having complete confidence in himself.

It would be wise, I feel, for anyone wishing to become a film director to step outside himself and spend some time examining his personality in a detached manner, and then to remember that the right (and rare) characteristics are in themselves of little value until supported by a thorough technical knowledge of film production.

FOCUS FILM COURSE PRIMER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

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FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;

C, family audiences; D, particularly for children

CAPTAIN HORNBLOWER, R.N.

Starring: Gregory Peck, Virginia Mayo, Robert Beatty, James Robertson Justice, Denis O'Dea.
Director: Raoul Walsh. **Distributors:** Warner Bros. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C.

Warner Brothers have every reason to blow their own horn for presenting such a successful film. *Captain Hornblower, R.N.*, overflows with good things. After so many murder films and psycho films in which we have been plunged in the morbid and messy depths of other people's subconscious minds, it is relief indeed to breathe in the wide open spaces of the sea and follow an objective story which has colour, space, pace, adventure, excitement, moments of poignancy and glory, a deal of unforced humour and excellent acting.

Work of Art

The Americans seldom make a technically bad film. The technical



Off to meet El. Supremo

merits of this film are superb. It has the same high technical quality as another Warner film: *Sierra Madre*. I understand that the original meaning of the word artist was "to join". This film is well joined. Sequence flows into sequence with a delightful rhythm which makes it pleasing to eye and nerve. As you watch this picture you get the impression that great pains have been taken to get everything right. The director, the lighting cameraman, the art-director, the editor, the special-effects man, and the technicolor adviser all deserve praise.

Good Entertainment

The sea stories of C. S. Forester lend themselves to the medium of the cinema; they have no axe to grind, no problems to propound; but they have movement, character and interesting characters.

From the word "go", this movie moves and keeps on moving. From the moment that I saw the sails of H.M.S. "Lydia" a-flapping in the waters of the Pacific I was interested. From the moment that I saw Captain Hornblower



A Serious Moment

(Gregory Peck) pacing the deck deep in thought (he was in a jam) I liked him. I liked the look of him. He seemed credible. The sort of fellow you could trust. I caught the thrill of the officers and ratings when the castle of the insurgent, Don Julian, was sighted. It was a tricky moment when Hornblower presented himself to this bully. He got away with his life and with orders to capture a Spanish galleon, the "Natividad". Hornblower, under cover of night, boards the "Natividad", a fight ensues, the captains of both vessels are engaged in a battle of swords. The "Natividad" is captured and Hornblower hands it over to Don Julian as an ally of his King.

Two Surprises

Now comes a surprise. As the "Lydia" sails for home a Spanish ship is sighted flying a white flag. Her captain comes aboard for parley. Hornblower learns that Spain is now an ally of England.

At all costs he must re-capture the "Natividad" from Don Julian. To add to his troubles he finds himself forced to take two ladies aboard.

To make an exciting story short, Hornblower gives chase to the "Natividad". Battle is joined. And what a battle! Most realistic! The "Lydia" is victorious.

From now on Lady Barbara Wellesley, not a bit the horsey-horsey type, but pretty and gay bobs in and out of the picture; she is the wrong woman in the wrong place, but somehow you don't mind. Her ladyship dresses up so often and so colourfully that you could believe that the captain had organised a sort of symbolic fashion parade to celebrate his victories and to prove that England is the mistress of the seas.

There is no point in revealing the whole of the story. It will be sufficient



A Battle Rages

to say that Hornblower carries out a daring plan and blows the "Sutherland" to bits. Himself and his lieutenant are captured and sent off to be tried as pirates. With the help of Quist they escape.

I fear that my allotted space allows me but a few more words, which must be words of tribute to all the cast, most particularly to Gregory Peck, Robert Beatty and James Robertson Justice.

E.



After Their Escape

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

OWING to the increased cost of postage on printed papers we are obliged to increase the rate on annual subscriptions to FOCUS: A Film Review, to 7s. 6d. per annum as from May 1st, 1951.

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

Starring: Richard Widmark, Walter (Jack) Pallance, Reginald Gardiner. **Producer:** Robert Bassler. **Director:** Lewis Milestone. Presented by 20th Century-Fox in Technicolor. *Certificate: A. Category: B. Running time: 112 minutes.*

There have been a number of films dealing with the capture of Japanese occupied islands in the Pacific. This is another. Why this preoccupation of American film makers with this phase of the war? Partly, I suppose, because there is no danger of offending the susceptibility of other nations by featuring only American Forces. Partly, also, no doubt, because such a subject is easier to handle than the complexity of larger scale battle. (Incidentally, could one truly say that films are more effective when recording small things rather than large, with the particular rather than the general? That there is a greater sense of reality given when we see a kettle boil or a man blow his nose than when we see an assemblage of world statesmen or an atomic explosion? I dally, perchance, with cinematic heresy.)

Many Minor Themes

An assault party makes a successful landing on the island, but subsequent advance is checked by a barrage of rocket shells. A party of marines succeed in locating the rocket site which is then summarily dealt with. Many of the incidents of the campaign are graphically depicted. For example, the fantastic splendour of ships firing at night, or the horror of flame-throwing tanks dealing with machine gun posts.

The film has many minor themes, such as the psychology of stuttering and migraine headaches, which clog the action of the main story. When a dog chases a rabbit he doesn't keep stopping to scratch himself for fleas.

The film catches its quarry in the end but is an unconscionably long time doing so.

T.

THIS IS MY AFFAIR

Starring: Susan Hayward, Dan Dailey, George Sanders. **Producer:** Sol C. Siegel. **Director:** Michael Gordon. 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate: U. Category: A. Running time: 89 minutes.*

It is undoubtedly Harriet Boyd's affair. This obvious young woman, a mannequin at a cheap New York gown-shop, is determined to achieve fame, and above all money, as a dress-designer, and cajoles two men, a middle-aged cutter and a young salesman, into a partnership with her. She shamelessly exploits her mother and sister in order to raise the necessary cash and when F. J. Noble (George Sanders), dictator of New York's fashions, starts taking an interest both in her and her work, she proceeds to try and play him and her two partners off against each other. Really she is such a nasty piece of work that all Susan Hayward's charm cannot lure one into having any sympathy for her; in fact one is left wondering whether Miss Hayward has much sympathy for the part herself.

Not Quite Alive

The same rather applies to Dan Dailey in the part of Teddy Sharman, the younger of the two partners, who is deeply in love with Harriet. I don't feel that either of them quite come alive, in spite of the happy ending.

Sam Jaffe gives a fine performance as Sam Cooper, the middle-aged partner who cherishes a paternal affection for Harriet: he provided the only moments of real beauty in the film.

Mr. Sanders is, of course, his own incomparable self—never a chance of being bored while he is on the screen. When he was not I felt that I might have to stifle a yawn in another minute.

For this picture is quite frankly mediocre.

T. C. F

DARK CITY

Starring: Charlton Heston, Lisabeth Scott, Viveca Lindfors, Dean Jagger, Don De Fore. **Producer:** Hal Wallis. **Director:** William Diebeler. **Paramount Films.**
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 97 minutes.

A man from Los Angeles comes East on business and hangs himself after poker losses and dishonest payment with business money. Of the three cardsharps who had played that poker session, two are quickly garotted by the victim's brother, and the third is some concern to the police who insist on effective but unenthusiastic protection for him. The murderer's appearance is unknown to the police, who know his name, though they don't seem to have thought of sending to Los Angeles for description or photograph. The sorry hero (Charlton Heston) does try something by going there and ingratiating himself with his victim's widow with the hope of getting a photograph of Miss Sidney Winant, but fails to get one. The story deals not too successfully with the increasing fears of the cardsharps and their various reactions. The revolting sight and sound of dangling feet tapping against wall or window would justify giving an "H" or Horror Certificate to the film, even without the actual showing of the murdering hands and tautening rope of the garotter.

Revolting

It was also revolting, in a quite different way, to have that strange mixture of uneasy sophistication and clinging insipidity fathered on to the unfortunate Lisabeth Scott with her part of the cheap night-club singer in love with the unresponsive hero. At least he was unresponsive for 96 of the 97 minutes of film.

While the background is murder and divorce, the foreground is cardsharps, suicide, murder and a happy ending with bigamy in prospect.

X.

BEDTIME FOR BONZO

Starring: Ronald Regan. Dianna Lynn, Walter Slezak. **Director:** Frederick de Cordova. **Producer:** Michel Kraike. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 83 minutes.

The star, in this farce with a purpose, is a real live chimpanzee, who plays (and plays about) very well indeed, and is the cause of much mischief and merriment.

Professor Peter Boyd (Ronald Regan), a psychology lecturer at Sheridan College, loves the Dean's daughter, but the Dean doesn't love Ronald for the reason that his father was an habitual criminal who died in prison. As an expert in genetics the Dean believes that Peter's children will inherit their grandfather's tendencies.

Aided and abetted by Hans Neumann (Walter Slezak), the science professor, Peter uses Bonzo, the College chimpanzee, to prove that the determining factor in one's life is not heredity but *environment*. He takes Bonzo into his own home and engages Jane Linden (Dianna Lynn) to act as mother. All very silly, you may think, to watch a nice girl like Dianna Lynn bringing up Bonzo; but mixed up with the nonsense you may gather some wisdom. I have nothing against psychiatry and psycho-analysis and genetics and their ilk, but some boys who practice these things do assume an omniscience and an omnipotence which becomes comical. This satire puts them in their proper place. Very good acting by Ronald Regan and Dianna Lynn.

E.

AT WAR WITH THE ARMY

Starring: Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis.
Distributors: Paramount. **Running time:** about 60 minutes.

A little bit of nonsense about American Army life wrapped up any old how in a lot of celluloid.

One chit of publicity about this film runs: "Audience reaction, THE TOPS ... Critic's reaction, THE BOTTOMS". I'm all for the critics!

E.

TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS

Starring: John Howard Davies, Robert Newton. **Producer:** Brian Desmond Hurst. **Director:** Gordon Parry. **Distributors:** Renown Pictures. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

In order that this film may be appreciated as it deserves all memories of the book should be left at home before setting off to the cinema. Those who know the novel well have, and maybe have had for years, their own conceptions of Doctor Arnold, Tom, Harry East, George Arthur and the rest; these would inevitably come between them and their enjoyment of the picture, which would be a pity, for there is so much to enjoy.

It is no small feat to have turned the story of Tom's life at Rugby, which extended over eight years, into a film lasting 96 minutes, and no one can object to much compression and adaptation in the process. The essential is that the characters should remain themselves: what they do and say on the screen should be in keeping, though not necessarily identical, with what they do and say in the book. This has been done on the whole successfully, the one lamentable exception being that of George Arthur, the timid, fatherless new boy whom Tom takes under his wing and who, by his true saintliness, succeeds in working such a transformation in Tom and his friend Harry East: the namby-pamby child depicted in the film could never have achieved this. But the fault does

not lie in the acting of Glyn Dearman, who plays the part, as conceived by screen-play author and director, extremely well. Still it must be admitted that, since Tom's transformation (I had almost said conversion) did not take place till he was much older, and the film for obvious reasons deals only with his early time at Rugby, the error is not as bad as it might have been.

There are other faults. The bullying scenes are magnified and distorted out of all proportion, especially in that of Tom's first song, performed amid a hail of missiles of every description. There is no hint of this in the book; nor that Tom suffered as much as he is depicted doing in the blanket-tossing. A little less bullying and more of the charming pictures of the boys playing games and bathing would have balanced the film better. The row in the common-room between the pro- and anti-Arnold masters is banal and ridiculous and should be cut out. The scene in which Tom, still a new boy, bullied, wretched and miserable, goes to the chapel to pour out the bitterness of his soul, and which might have been so effective, is completely ruined by a four-part setting of the Our Father, heard off.

So much for the defects. But what a lot there is to delight both heart and eye! Tom's parting from his father at the door of the inn, and the sight of the coach which bears him for the first time to Rugby as it passes through country lanes in the early dawn are wholly charming; the great fight with the bully Flashman is extremely realistic (so much so that I believe John Howard Davies had to retire to hospital after it had been shot); the near-drowning in the weir of Tom and his friends is really thrilling.

But of much greater importance is the fact that the sincerely religious atmosphere of the book has passed into the film. I have already mentioned Tom's solitary, silent prayer in the chapel, and there are two good scenes of Doctor Arnold conducting prayers. Best of all is the incident occasioned by Arthur's serious illness, in which East, who would never pray "because when you do there is no one there to listen", finds that after all "there is Someone listening all the time". The rare and intensely moving beauty of these scenes, which might so



Football match in the old days



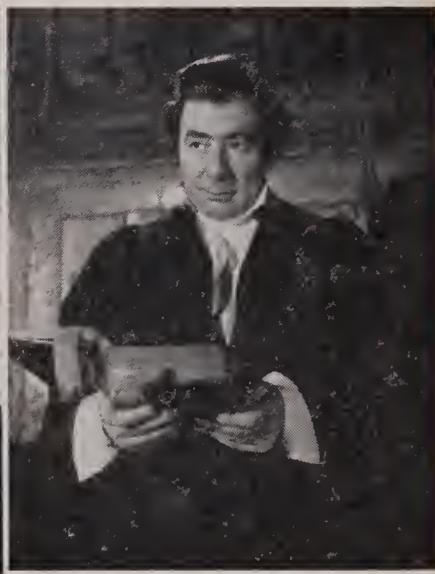
The Bully is nearly drowned



Tom Brown



Harry East



The Headmaster

easily have degenerated into mere sentimentality, reflects great credit on producer, director and actors

The photography is consistently excellent throughout, especially in the open-air scenes. Most of it was done at Rugby, and great pains have been taken to reproduce the costumes and the whole set-up of the period, with remarkable success.

The acting is of a high order. In the smaller parts I would single out James Hayter as Old Thomas, Hermione Baddeley as Sally Harrowell, Amy Veness as Mrs. Wixie and Max Bygraves as the Coach Guard, as well as the group of Tom's school-friends. Of the principals Robert Newton's Doctor Arnold reveals all the great qualities of the man save the greatest of all—his intense spirituality and burning charity which are so admirably portrayed in the book but hardly suggested on the screen. More's the pity.

John Howard Davies' good looks and general charm make of him a delightful Tom who excites all our sympathy when he is bullied and unhappy. But he has not quite enough of Tom's tremendous vitality, though I think this is partly due to the fact that we see too much of his tragic moments and not enough of his gay ones.

John Forrest is extremely good as the bully, Flashman, but is hampered by being so handsome and having such an air of distinction one cannot really believe him to be such a young brute.

But the best performance of all is undoubtedly that of John Charlesworth as Harry or "Scud" East, Tom's first and best school-friend. In the book he says of himself: "They think I'm a devil-may-care, reckless young scamp. So I am—eleven hours out of twelve—but not the twelfth . . . We're very good friends at games and all that, but not a soul of them but you and Arthur ever tried to break through the crust, and see whether there was anything good at the bottom of me; and then the bad ones I won't stand, and they know that." John Charlesworth's portrayal of this cheerful, jolly boy brimming over with fun, who takes both bitter and sweet with a laugh but yet reveals such hidden depths when brought up against suffering and death, is a masterpiece. The look on his face when he realises, in the scene alluded to above, that his prayer for his sick friend has been answered is most moving. Bravo, John!

Go and see it all for yourself, and that as soon as may be, for you will probably want to go again. I know I do.
T. C. F.

TEA FOR TWO

Starring: Doris Day, Gordon MacRae,

Gene Nelson and S. Z. Sakall.

Director: David Butler. Colour by Technicolor. A Warner Bros.

Production. *Certificate:* U.

Category: B.

This musical was suggested by the popular play of twenty years ago, "No, No, Nanette," and includes many of the original songs that Vincent Youmans wrote for it: "I want to be happy", "Tea for Two", "No, No, Nanette" and others. It speaks well for them that though they have been churned out for us for two decades by

Gordon MacRae



THE ADVENTURERS

Starring: Dennis Price, Jack Hawkins, Siobhan McKenna, with Peter Hammond, Gregoire Aslan, Bernard Lee. **Producer:** Aubrey Baring. **Director:** David MacDonald. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

That a film should not be just like a lot of others is half the battle—or at least a quarter. And so I was pleased to find that this one was about South Africa during and after the Boer War. And I had another agreeable surprise. A horse had to be shot, to its owner's great regret. I know how horses are shot in films, I thought. We shall hear the crack of the rifle and see the owner wince and avert his eyes. Well, we didn't

The adventures which the adventurers meet with are concerned with diamonds and gold mines and trekking across the trackless veldt. Siobhan McKenna has a small, tight-lipped part. She looked as if the whalebone, in which women were encased in those days, had entered into her very soul.

Not an enthralling film, but an eminently decent one. Q.

inferior dance bands and well worn gramophone records they still come up as smiling, fresh and breezy as ever. Not so the number called "Crazy Rhythm", which I imagine is a modern addition. Displays of human degeneracy of this kind should only be permitted behind the bars of padded cells. With this exception this musical is a jolly affair, with Doris Day pleasantly performing, but regrettably lapsing into crooning at times, when she is singing "straight". Gordon MacRae does not risk his reputation in this way, and sings seriously and well, while S. Z. Sakall's humour bubbles and sparkles throughout the show. He loses his fortune, but he steals the picture.

G.

Doris Day

TRAVELLERS' JOY

Starring: Googie Withers, John McCallum, with Yolande Donlan. **Producer:** Antony Darnborough. **Director:** Ralph Thomas. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 78 minutes.

Since a book can be called a best seller, a play might be called a best runner. And now another best runner has been transferred to the screen. But one feels that the story of the ingenuity of British visitors to Sweden, who have exhausted their currency, has not gained by the absence of Yvonne Arnaud.

Yolande Donlan gives a very good characterisation of a come-hithering American blonde whom one would go miles to avoid. Dora Bryan, always a good actress, is excellent in the part of a Swedish maid. The script is clean and straightforward, if only rarely witty. The divorced atmosphere is duly cleared, for the divorced couple are happily reunited and the dialogue makes it clear (though not, of course, in so many words) that no one has committed adultery. In fact the only fault I have to find with this comedy is that on the whole it is not particularly funny. Q.



LIGHTS OUT

Starring: Arthur Kennedy and Peggy Dow, with James Edwards, Will Geer, John Hudson and Julia Adams. **Director:** Mark Robson. A Universal-International Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 97 minutes.

Pope Pius XI said that good motion pictures could contribute to social justice and understanding between classes and peoples. The American cinema has made a big effort to produce films which may be said to have had some effect in this direction. Not always perfect, either from the moral or artistic standpoint, but, also, not without considerable merit, bearing in mind the non-Catholic and often non-Christian context in which so large a part of modern life is passed..

Based on a novel of the same name by Baynard Kendrick, *Lights Out* is a further example in the series of "rehabilitation" and "problem" films which began with *The Best years of Your Life* and went through such themes as colour-bar adjustment in *Home of the Brave* and *Pinky*, and social and physical readjustment in *The Men*. It deals with the special problems belonging to men blinded in the war and treats its subject with considerable restraint, having in mind the dripping sentimentality with which some films of this character have been saturated in the past. It is true that one feels that the chief character in *Lights Out* endures a plethora of unfortunate experiences unlikely to be the lot of any one man; still, the situations are not impossible and it is a useful thing to be confronted with the embarrassments and mortifications which even the most thoughtful can cause to persons suffering some physical disability.

Larry Nevins (Arthur Kennedy) is tempted to suicide when he discovers that he is blind for life, but Corporal Flagg (John Hudson) convinces him that there is much useful responsibility for him to undertake. He goes through a rehabilitation course with flying colours, but then discovers that his parents feel pity for him rather than

happiness at his survival. His fiancée (Julia Adams) is unable to bring herself to accept life with a blind man and he returns to his rehabilitation centre to continue another course, in law, which will make him a useful citizen. He is also reunited with Judy (Peggy Dow), a sympathetic girl with whom he can find true happiness. He is likewise reconciled to his friend, Joe Morgan (James Edwards), whom he had insulted, not realising in his blindness that Joe was a Negro.

The acting of Arthur Kennedy is virile and convincing as the blind man. Peggy Dow is suitably cast as the understanding girl friend, but I fear that the camera is not always kind to her somewhat uneven features. It is mainly a question of excessive make-up. The remainder of the cast are adequate to the demands made upon them without achieving distinction.

V.

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Starring: David Farrar and Nadia Gray, with Maurice Teynac, June Clyde and Gilles Queant. **Director:** Anthony Pellisier. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

When one praises the French and other Continental films that are seen in this country it is sometimes forgotten that there are probably a large number of very indifferent films which, mercifully, never see the light of an English day (or should I say, night?) I am moved to this reflection by the thought of how bad some of our British films have been of late and the hope that they never travel abroad to disgrace us.

One of the poorest, both in script, acting and direction, is *Night Without Stars*. David Farrar, as an almost blind man, stumbles, most unconvincingly, into a blackmarket gang in the South of France. After they have tricked him in various ways he comes back to London and gets the sight of one eye restored, with which he returns to the Riviera to clear things up. The film comes to an end without much conspicuous assistance

from Mr. Farrar. Car crashes, dead bodies, disgruntled Resistance heroes and the beautiful Nadia all take a part in this starless night, but it is a waste of a lot of money, even if it was a "cheap" film and I do not think you need worry to add it to your collection.

V.

FATHER'S LITTLE DIVIDEND

Starring: Spencer Tracy, Joan Bennett and Elizabeth Taylor, with Don Taylor and Billy Burke. **Director:** Vincente Minelli. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

We last saw Spencer Tracy working himself into a lather of paternal perspiration as the father of the bride. Now we see the same paternal anxiety being transformed into grandpaternal perspiration as the first baby begins to arrive and the four prospective grandparents experience, vicariously, the pangs they suffered when their own little dividends matured. Of course, there is now added the wisdom (and snobbery) of age and the way they try to organise the baby's arrival and

subsequent progress almost brings about the separation of his parents. However, everything turns out nicely in the end and we are enabled to sit back and enjoy an amusing comedy built round all the old chestnuts concerning babies, grandparents, nappies and the rest. The interesting thing is that Spencer Tracy and Joan Bennett are such artists that the old stuff almost sounds convincing.

I know that one does not take these films too seriously, but I wonder to what extent such a film reflects American social habits? The business about consulting up-to-date doctors who have primitive ideas on pre-natal care; the slightly excessive nursery arrangements for the one-and-only; the six-months-delayed baptism (Methodist) which is so obviously much more a social event than a sacrament; the complete absence of Christian symbols or belief in the homes of the three families concerned. Sad to think that, if and when Master Banks becomes a Catholic, he will have to be baptised conditionally, for despite the social éclat attending his first visit to church, the minister gave him but a perfunctory sprinkle of the necessary water!

Still, you will find *Father's Little Dividend* a good evening's investment.

V.

JEALOUSY

Starring: Larry Parks, Barbara Hall, Willard Parker. **Producer:** Nat Perrin. **Director:** Edward Buzzell. Presented by Columbia Pictures. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 78 minutes.

This is a mildly amusing comedy about a rich but idle young man who has married a conscientious lady doctor. He has too jealous a regard for her so she leaves him at the end of three days to seek a divorce and marry somebody else who is more tolerant.

To extract what interest there is in the film, it is necessary to abandon the Christian conception of matrimony. On due reflection you will, I trust, consider this too high a price to pay.

T.



Grandpa Spencer

CONTINENTAL FILMS

DROLE DE DRAME

Starring: Louis Jouvet, Michel Simon, Françoise Rosay, Jean-Louis Barrault and Jean-Pierre Aumont.
Director: Marcel Carne. **Distributors:** Film Traders Ltd.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 97 minutes.

This French burlesque of London in the naughty nineties is all the more funny for its unintended burlesque of French ideas about English ways of life in the rich and unconfined period of Victorian ascendancy. The Protestant Bishop inveighing against the pernicious vogue for detective novels, the very French Inspector Bray from Scotland Yard, the "Bobbies" with their very un-English gait and girth, the unconsciously funny newspaper reporter with his exquisite French manners, the Limehouse "tough" with the ballet-master's grace of movement and the poet's power of expression, the Gilbertian character of the botanist who believes that his mimosa thrives on gin . . . all these delicious people are all the funnier for being *Ecnglish* and so varyy, varyy improbable.

Marcel Carné made this film in 1937 and it is not clear to what extent he intended the burlesque he achieves. He is admirably served by a galaxy of star talent, each of whom is worth going to see. Françoise Rosay, younger and so aristocratic; Michel Simon, looking like a caricature of Sir Arthur Sullivan; Jean Louis Barrault, complete with cloth cap and jersey as a homicidal maniac who loves animals and therefore specialises in killing butchers who are cruel to animals; Louis Jouvet as "Soper, Bishop of Beckford", whose passion for food is only equalled by his hatred of detective novels. He is a humbug and his roving eye and stupendous snobbery bring about the fantastic situations which provide the story of the film.

All principals act vigorously and well and evidently enjoy themselves thoroughly.

One feels a certain doubt as to the propriety of allowing a Protestant Bishop to be presented in such an uncomplimentary light. One is accustomed to fun at the expense of

clerics such as the Private Secretary and others, but surely a Bishop, even an heretical one with an army of children, is too elevated an ecclesiastic for the fun poked at him to be anything less than very bad taste.

Still, it is all too farcical to be taken seriously. V.

LES AMOUREUX SONT SEULS AU MONDE

French dialogue—English sub-titles
Starring: Louis Jouvet, Léo Lapara, Fernand René, Philippe Nicaud, Renée Devillers, Dany Robin.
Director: Henry Decoin. **Scenario, Adaptation and Dialogue:** Henri Jeanson. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 94 minutes.

This is the old, old story of a young pupil (Dany Robin), a gifted pianist, who loses her heart to a distinguished composer (Louis Jouvet), who is old enough to be her papa or grand-papa.

Although the theme has little substance it is not without a certain superficial charm, which is probably due to some pleasing strains of music and some distinguished acting, particularly by Jouvet, who has the gift of what I would like to call "transformation".

The film opens in a charming, promising way, but as it evolves it becomes (I thought) involved.

There is this much (which is a lot) to be said for the film . . . it ends on a Christian note. The distinguished composer shakes himself free from the snares of the little one; and Sylvia (Renée Devillers), the composer's wife, does not commit suicide. E.

MA POMME

Starring: Maurice Chevalier, with Sophie Desmarets, Raymond Bussières and Vera Norman.
Director: Marc-Gilbert Sauvajon.
Distributors: Films de France.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 102 minutes.

We last saw Maurice Chevalier as a rather charming if unconventional king in *Le Roi*. Now we see him as an equally charming but much more restrained tramp. The theme of the film is the one made famous by Hollywood in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, the simple, contented, good hearted

fellow who finds that extreme wealth is a cause of unhappiness and so gets rid of it. In this case, however, the characterisation is frankly more farcical and less easy to believe in. The amiable tramp who prefers to wander around with a crony singing plaintive songs to tight-pursed market crowds, and who says that he is much more comfortable sleeping a wheel-barrow than in a bed is less credible than the small town Distributist who merely wants to set-up small holdings with his unexpected and embarrassing wealth.

The tramp decides to accept his wealth when he finds that he can play fairy-godfather to a young married couple. We see him, after dealing with two erring spouses, wandering down the endless road in his tattered rags, singing his tramp song of freedom.

A pleasing, unpretentious film with several laughs and some moralising

about the evils of wealth. One could believe this high-sounding preaching more easily if only we had a little more of the filthy lucre to be tempted with!
V.

LES CASSE-PIEDS

(As Others See Us)

Starring: Noel-Noel, Bernard Blier, Marghuerite Deval, Jean Tissier and Georges Rollin. **Director:** Jean Dreville. **Distributors:** Blue Ribbon Films. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes.

Here is an amusing excursion into a kind of Film Revue with Noel-Noel as Compere. A series of sketches is built up around the idea of lecturing about bores. A re-reading of Moliere's *Les Facheux* convinces him that these

THE MASTER CALLETH

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The Wise Virgins



Maidenhood Takes the Cross

tiresome people still exist and have, indeed, been enabled by means of motor-cars, telephones, the cinema and such modern inventions to inflict themselves upon their victims at long-distance and by delayed-action techniques.

There is much satire and gentle

leg-pulling before Noel-Noel reaches the conclusion that he, too, is a bore, and that, probably, we are all pests to one another!

The film makes use both of subtitles in English and an English commentator who discreetly dubs Noel-Noel's lecture.

V.

From Our Educational Panel

VISUAL AIDS

The substance of an Address delivered by Frank E. Farley at a meeting of the Metropolitan Branch of the Association of Convent Schools on March 10th, 1951

The term "visual aids" came originally from America, where it used to include every device by which the teacher imparts knowledge through the use of sight. In England the definition is more limited in its scope and embraces only those devices which possess the quality of multiplication, such as charts or photographs, or which it is possible to magnify optically. The term "optical aids" is given to those instruments which function by the use of light and lenses, not to charts and graphs which are usually termed "graphic aids".

In the early stages of the development of visual aids, too much attention was given to their mechanism and the use of the more simple graphic aids was neglected. These latter give a greater range of matter for the choice of the teacher; films often impose a restriction on his plans, and can less easily be adapted for the teacher's own purposes. A proper balance in the use of mechanical and graphic aids is necessary to achieve the desired results. A second mistake was made in supposing that pictures can replace the written word; here again the right balance must be maintained. Visualisation cannot be separated from description; pictures may often be

incomprehensible to the child without an explanatory background—each has its own part to contribute to fruitful learning. Verbal explanation and discussion is to be followed by verbal activity by the children, but pictures save time and make for a more complete understanding of the subject.

The two kinds of equipment in general use are the film-strip and the cinema. The development of the cinema for mass instruction brought renewed interest in visual aids of all kinds, but especially in the film-strip and cinema itself. The film-strip is the modern counterpart of the old optical lantern with the advantage of cheapness and probability; it is a happy medium between the cinema and the comparatively heavy and expensive lantern slides. The device of story-telling through a sequence of still pictures is very old indeed and of universal appeal, and may be found in the cartoon strips in the adult newspaper and in children's comics. The film strip is the appropriate medium for static subjects and those for which it is important that the rate of argument and presentation be controlled. It is an aid to detailed study, and may be used, for example, to show the different conditions

prevailing during the successive stages in the unfolding of a subject.

The cinema is, on the whole, a new tool in the teacher's hand and introduces alteration in class-room relations, and a change in teaching technique. It brings movement into the class room and is the only means of reproducing the stir and rhythm by which the children are surrounded in the living world outside. By means of the cinema it is possible to vary the apparent speed of movements, the slow can be speeded up and vice versa. The almost imperceptible growth of living things can be seen as a complete process; swift movements can be studied as a sequence of subsidiary movements. Dynamic maps and diagrams can enable the children to understand the relations of cause and effect, and the action and structure of organisms and mechanisms can be more clearly explained. Drama is another advantage brought by the cinema since it both holds the attention and appeals to the emotion, and is thus more impressive than the static picture sequence.

The chief disadvantage of the cinema is the expense involved. The teacher must often ask himself whether he is justified in incurring the cost, or whether he cannot achieve his purpose in some other way. If it is a case where movement is concerned it is probable that the desired educational result can be obtained in no other way. If the topic is static, then he may resort to such aids as plans, models, pictures, etc.

When the teacher is preparing his subject he will probably collect together his pictures, sort and order them to fit into his plan, and where movement is required he will probably need films, usually of the short and silent kind to suit his purposes. But such a method implies a very narrow view of the possibilities of the film strip and cinema film. The film strip and cinema have the great advantage of helping to save time. Relations which are intolerably complex to the child's mind in the verbal form become comprehensible when seen on the screen. This leads to a telescoping of the whole curriculum. As Science progresses and the horizons of knowledge widen the syllabus must be readjusted. The conception of the minimum knowledge to be acquired

expands, and the problem of the curriculum can only be solved by the application of the new teaching technique, namely that which saves time.

If films do not fulfil our expectations it is often because they have reproduced the traditional way of teaching in visual form, and have not thereby extended the horizons. The purpose of the film is to give new experience, to take the children to share the surroundings of different peoples, to be a substitute rather for a journey or camp than for a formal lesson. There must be sound, for in an unfamiliar country one does not travel without a guide, and so a commentary is needed. Captions are unsuitable—the modern child is unused to them and the sequence is broken in a quite artificial way. Speaking about a film by the teacher is indefensible; the children are captivated by the hypnotism of the movement, and the impersonal voice of a commentator synchronising with the film does not break the spell as would the voice of an ordinary person.

The film should be introduced by the teacher, words should be explained, questions may be prompted, but once the film has begun the teacher should not intrude. Afterwards a communal discussion may take place so that the teacher may gather how the children have viewed the film and may correct mistakes in the passage of time, false generalisations, etc., which they have made. A second showing is often desirable so that the children can be guided to points missed the first time. After this the lesson may be ended, but the subject will continue. Various forms of activity may be prompted and the knowledge applied to other topics. It will generally be followed up by some form of talking and writing, for when everything has been said, words still remain the handiest form of expression.

AIDS TO SCRIPTURE TEACHING

The Projected Bible

Old and New Testament film strips in Natural Colour, obtainable from Visual Education Ltd., 9 Upper Berkeley Street, W.1.

In this series each "volume" consists of 12 colour strips in metal containers

packed in a box designed to resemble a book, and thus made convenient for storage. The strips are reasonably priced at 22s. 6d. each or £12 for the set and are supplied with teaching notes. These provide suggestions for treatment and give captions and full references to scripture passages. It is essential that the strips should be used, as intended, in close conjunction with the Bible text, and the strips, far from minimising the importance of the teacher's rôle, demand careful preparation as well as sympathetic insight into the fundamental meaning of the Scripture narrative.

A. Old Testament Characters

This volume of 12 strips aims at illustrating the ways of God with man as typified in the lives of eight great characters of the Bible; Noe, Abraham, Joseph and Moses are obvious choices, and the interpretation of their lives is done with reverence and imaginative sympathy. If the main aim were historical detail, there might be some questioning of the accuracy of scenery and dress, but emphasis throughout is upon the universality of the Bible's message, and its relevance for today. Yet in a series representing the Old Testament as a whole the omission of any representative figure from the Kingdoms seems strange—the later crowded years of the Old Testament provide only two of the characters; Ruth and the Prophet Daniel.

Nevertheless much useful material is here collected and presented skilfully in a form which could be adapted for use both with Juniors or with advanced groups. The colour and line of the drawings are simple and on the whole very pleasing. It should be noted that the text used and the spelling of names is not that of our Catholic versions, but since captions are not on the strips themselves this need not cause difficulty, as the necessary changes may be made by reference to an approved version.

Titles :

Noah—Preacher of Righteousness.
Abraham—Founder of the Hebrew Nation.
Abraham—Friend of God.

The Story of Joseph (I).
The Story of Joseph (II).
The Story of Moses (I).
The Story of Moses (II).
The Story of Joshua.
The Story of Gideon.
The Story of Ruth.
The Story of Daniel (I).
The Story of Daniel (II).

B. New Testament Stories

In this set 27 "stories" are grouped in 12 strips covering the life and teaching of Our Lord; the last four dealing with SS. Peter and Paul form an introduction to the Acts of the Apostles.

Within certain limits these pictures should be of considerable use in a Catholic school. Two strips are devoted to the Miracles of Our Lord and two to the parables. There is a fairly detailed survey of the events of the Passion and Resurrection, and the early life of Christ is shown in one strip. On the whole, however, these fall short of the standard set in the Old Testament series—perhaps because we are here more exacting in our requirements, and there are obvious gaps which every Catholic teacher would have to fill in. This arises naturally enough from the attempt to present the Scriptures without insistence on dogmatic teaching. The series will be very useful in helping to make children and young people more familiar with the character of Christ as friend and Master.

Titles :

The First Christmas . . .
The Power of Jesus in Miracle.
The Love of Jesus in Miracle.
Talks with the Master.
The Parables of the Kingdom.
Lost and Found.
The King Cometh.
After Three Days.
Simon called Peter.
Saint Peter.
Paul the Fearless (Parts I and II).

C.F.I. NOTES

Summer Meeting

Readers will recall that we agreed to support the efforts of any of our regional friends to organise a Summer Meeting in lieu of our customary Summer School this year.

We are very glad to be able to report that the very efficient and lively Birmingham Youth Organisation, under its leaders, Fathers T. Copey and D. Hickling, have undertaken to organise an Amateur Film Exhibition at Stratford in the middle of October. The Course will be restricted to actual workers in sub-standard film and members will be invited to show their films and discuss each other's work. Andrew Buchanan and Father J. A. V. Burke have promised to be present, and it is hoped that this may be the opportunity we have long been looking for whereby the nucleus of a really worthwhile Catholic Film Production Group can be recruited. We hope, too, that an annual Festival of Religious Films may be the outcome of this effort.

We are particularly hopeful that the many priest workers in film, hitherto so shy of letting their work be known, will make an effort to attend the Stratford Film Meeting and let us have the benefit of their experience and ideas.

Further details later. But mark the dates: October 8th-13th at Stratford-on-Avon.

Film Competition

The above paragraph leads us naturally but regretfully to the question of the Film Competition. Only four entries were submitted, one from Australia. It has been difficult to arrange a time suitable for viewing films of which only one copy exists, a copy which the owner is reluctant to leave out of his sight, especially when, as in two cases, the films are being shown to interested local audiences.

Regretfully, because so few of the many Catholics who must have made films during the last few years, cared to let us view their work. Perhaps the Stratford Film Meeting will serve to assure them that we are anxious to be of assistance and that we think they can contribute something worthwhile

to the great cause of Catholic Film Action.

Focus Film Course

This Course continues at More House, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7. On April 7th, Mr. Buchanan spoke of the News Film and pointed out that just as the world was enslaved by "newspapers" which so often influenced the views of readers without their being much aware of the fact, so the News Reel, the child of the newspaper, did much the same thing. It follows the same tradition of imparting views and ideas by means of selective and continued "leading article" and "headline" techniques. It panders to the present state of things as far as politics is concerned and eschews "propaganda" except in so far as it always supports the powers that be.

Having dealt with the development of the News Reel organisation and the method of distributing coverage among the five component groups which make up the News Reel Association, Mr. Buchanan urged the formation of a Religious News Reel group. Not with the intention of producing a replica of the secular hotch-potch of bits and pieces, but rather a serious attempt to produce a series of religious documentaries of the *March of Time* pattern which could be of interest to people in several years time. There is no reason why the amateur film makers up and down the country could not be grouped together to form such an organisation.

The next Film Course Lecture in April will be on *Film Music*, by Fr. J. A. V. Burke. The May Lectures will take place on May 5th, *The Educational Film*, and May 19th, *Children and the Cinema*. The first will be given by a member of the Visual Aids Federation, the second by the Hon. Mrs. R. Bower.

Change of Address

Readers are asked to notice that the address of the Catholic Film Institute is now 157 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, to which all enquiries should in future be directed. The telephone number is: TATe Gallery 8426.

BOOK REVIEW

Le Cinéma. No. 56 of *Fêtes et Saisons*, 29 Bd. Latour-Maubourg, Paris VIIe.

The Dominicans in France publish a monthly magazine, *Fêtes et Saisons*, dealing with questions which face the Christian living in the world today. This number is devoted to the whole art of the Cinema, and is published in collaboration with the Catholic periodical, *Radio-Cinéma*.

The profusion of "stills" from films, photos of stars and pictures of off-stage work, gives a pleasing impression, and one most likely to appeal to a cinema-going public. Behind the illustrations, however, throughout the 24 pages, there is a serious attitude to the film; on the front cover are quotations from Pope Pius XII and Lenin, emphasising its power, and at the back are exhortations to "Aimez-le intelligemment". The purpose of this issue is to put forward in palatable form many interesting facts, and then to persuade people to reflect and form their conclusions.

The invention of moving pictures has produced a universal language with an influence so great that the dangers of its abuse are obvious. Films have the power of introducing false ideas as being true to life, of fostering unhealthy hero-worship and, worst of all, of directing, or at least tempering, the consciences of young people. As an antidote, *Le Cinéma* suggests a well-balanced knowledge of the art of film-making and the formation of Ciné-Clubs. What does the schoolmaster taking "Athalie" think of the idea? How can he dare say that the cinema is unimportant when the children he is teaching will go to the pictures probably every week for the rest of their lives and will never again read "Athalie"? Wherein is the logic of refusing to prepare children for this influential part of their everyday life? What about the mother with no time to see the films that her 14 and 15 year olds are watching? What about the parish priest, too busy to discuss current film with his flock? Ciné-clubs are a solution and the magazine offers practical suggestions for founding them. You do not need a hall and an

expensive projector; just a group of people who know about the same film and there is your Club.

An interesting article takes us behind the scenes of film-making, shows what is involved in the great industry and where the money goes. Another points out to the pessimists that the youngest art will not kill interest in the older arts, not even in literature, since it exists as something entirely different and intrinsically *cinematographic*. Photography has not banished painting nor the novel, poetry; each fulfils a function and is irreplaceable. Certainly no life of a saint was ever told as forcefully as that of *Monsieur Vincent*, but no film can reproduce the tremendous words of Isaias or St. John.

There is given a list of films which should not have been missed; it includes only three British right from early days—*Desert Victory*, *Hamlet* and *The Seventh Veil*. But the French also enjoyed *Brief Encounter*, *Passport to Pinlico* and *Whisky à Gogo* (I can't resist the translation). These evidently portray the British character to French satisfaction. Respect for Russian films is very evident, particularly for *Battleship Potemkin* and *Battle of Stalingrad*.

Apart from the disconcerting lack of page numbers, I have nothing but praise for this little magazine which, crowded with information, tries to be just in putting forward the blessings that the film has brought as well as its dangers. It presents a review of what the cinema really is. In conclusion, I quote from the rules for spectators:

Don't go to the cinema from sheer force of habit.

Make sure that the film you are going to see is really worth the trouble.

In one year there are only ten films that one *must* see, rarely more.

Don't be surprised to see priests and teachers at the pictures; it would be a very serious matter for them to ignore the cinema.

A film whose propriety is unimpeachable can be immoral through its stupidity.

Yes, the French take their films seriously, if *Le Cinéma* is a criterion.

M. A.

COVER PERSONALITY

Pier Angeli

It is not often the case that we feature a film star on the cover of *Focus* who is almost certainly unknown to our readers. Indeed, until a year ago, Pier Angeli had no idea of becoming an actress. Yet, I was one of a number of guests recently invited by M.-G.-M.'s London publicity department to an elaborate Press Reception to meet this eighteen-year-old Italian girl, who is now working on her third film in Rome.

The hospitable M.-G.-M. publicity group were literally crowding with delight about the pretty, vivacious, unself-conscious girl who sat surrounded by Press photographers and admiring interviewers. Her mother, pleasant, obviously proud of the attention being lavished on her daughter, but also just a little uneasy about the whole extraordinary business, sat with one eye on her child while she answered almost as many questions as her daughter. She does not speak English, but was glad to have a copy of *Focus* with our review of Pier's first film, *Domani e troppo tardi*, and at once pounced on a misspelling of her name.

M.-G.-M.'s gratification over their new discovery is excusable. Anna Maria Pierangeli has, in addition to her good looks, those qualities of intelligence, self-possession, hidden depths of character and friendly charm which add up to produce personality. Not many of the stars, particularly the youthful, untried ingenues who people the American screen, could sustain the impression of charm and artless sincerity as this child does. Those who have seen her in *Domani e troppo tardi* will remember the leggy, long-plaited, adolescent girl who was so troubled by the emotional reactions brought about by her schoolday friendships. She was utterly convincing as the thirteen-year-old child, conscious of her budding womanhood, but mystified by the bother and chatter produced by her unsophisticated attempts to get an answer to her problems. It is not often that such a character can be presented on the screen without the embarrassment almost inevitably produced by Hollywood's teen-agers in similar situations, or the sense of gauchery that British youngsters impart to such rôles.

Her part in this film was the result

of chance. Leonide Moguy, the French director, was working on the film and saw Anna Maria in the apartment of a friend. He recognised in her the girl he was seeking for the principal part. She was an art student in Rome and had no intention of following a stage or screen career. After *Domani e troppo tardi* was finished she continued her art studies, but was once again, by chance, projected into her next film, the M.-G.-M. production, *Teresa*, the story of an American G.I. and his young Italian war bride. The authors of the film were in Italy advertising for girls between the ages of 15 and 20 to try for the part. Anna Maria did not see the advertisements, but her mother had a mysterious telephone call one morning from Silvio Damico, head of one of the best-known dramatic academies of Europe. Though he would not let any of his own pupils try for the rôle of *Teresa*, he had seen the rushes of *Domani e troppo tardi* and he was convinced that she could play the part. He told Mrs. Pierangeli to take Anna Maria to the testing studio. She got the part as soon as the Producer, Arthur Loew, and Director, Fred Zinnemann, had seen the tests in America. Zinnemann, the famous director of *The Search*, after seeing the first rushes said: "No matter how I manage to make this picture, that girl will carry it". After one day of shooting, Zinnemann confessed that he had made several retakes of her, "not because there was anything wrong but because each time she did it there would be some new expression, some different movement that I hadn't noticed before. If you just shot a series of close-ups of her you would have a fascinating motion picture". Such praise from veteran film-makers is high indeed and there seems every reason to suppose that if she gets the right kind of scripts and is handled properly she will climb to the heights of screen fame.

Her next film is called *The Light Touch* in which she plays opposite Stewart Granger. M.-G.-M. have decided that her full name is too much for the film-goers and so have divided her surname in two: Pier Angeli. A pity, for it does not convey the essentially Italian and Christian background which is so vital a part of her. However, by whatever name she plays she will certainly reach the top. Let us hope that her fame will not spoil a singularly charming and unaffected young girl.

JOHN VINCENT.

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A FILM REVIEW



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2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

JUNE 1951

No. 6

INCREASE OR DECREASE

My dear readers of FOCUS,

You will have observed that during the past twelve months or so, a number of reputable magazines, of the smaller class, have been forced out of circulation owing to financial difficulties.

FOCUS has been able to maintain its stand in the war of ideas, not because it has secret funds and is well off (you would be surprised if you knew how very poor we are!), but because most of the services to FOCUS are freely rendered.

The Editor, the Manager and the priests who write the film reviews are unpaid servants and, as far as I am aware, they are willing to remain as such, in order to help to create a Christian Cinema and to forward the principles laid down in the papal encyclical "Vigilanti cura", which in this country is, I fear, a literary cinderella.

You will have observed also that the recent budget, which descended upon us like a hatchet, has forced all newspapers, periodicals and magazines either to decrease in size or to increase in price. Some papers have done both. FOCUS would like to do neither; but the high costs of paper, postage, parcelling and so on, forbid a *status quo*.

The other day the editorial board met and put its several heads together to determine in what manner we could best serve our readers. The manager told us that we must either increase the price of FOCUS to 6d. or decrease to twenty-four pages. We decided that to rend your reading space rather than to rend your pockets would be the best policy. This policy will come into effect with the July issue.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your support, your kindness and your tolerance. To those of you who write letters of encouragement and express ways and means of improving FOCUS I am deeply grateful.

Yours sincerely,

DECLAN FLYNN, O.F.M., *Editor*.

Romance At Last

FOCUS is sometimes criticised for not containing chatty paragraphs about the private lives of film stars. So once in a way, in order to compete with some other periodicals, we are featuring the engagement of those popular favourites John Fandelight and Pretty Voidhead. "Better send Q. to cover this," the editor said, "he can do it in his sleep."

When I visited the Voidhead home it was the star's mother who opened the door.

"Is it about the whist drive?" she said, as soon as she saw my clerical collar.

"No. It's about something more important than that."

Mrs. Voidhead became rather nervous and on the defensive.

"I know we don't go to church much," she said, "but I believe in living up to it in your life. 'Practical Christianity, that's what matters,' my father used to say. We all loved him, though he did knock mother about on Saturday nights."

"No," I said. "It's not that. I've come to ask about a certain little romance." I tried to smile archly.

"Oh, you mean about Pretty and John Fandelight? Yes, it's quite true and I expect they will be announcing it soon. We're very pleased. Ever since she was a little girl we've looked forward to the day of her divorce. And I always say, unless you get married you can't get divorced. 'It's not only for your own sake, dear,' I tell her, 'but for your career. Why, Shirley Temple and Deanna Durbin both had a divorce before they were your age.' We're glad it's John, too. He's so well balanced. He was the innocent party in one of his divorces and the guilty one in the other. He's just the man for Pretty."

"Is Pretty her real name?"

"Well, no. Her father still calls her Violet but she doesn't like it. 'I wish you would stop calling me Violet, Dad,'

she says. 'Do you think I want everyone to know my real name?'"

"And what does Mr. Voidhead say to that?"

"He says she wants a good kick on the—a good kick. He doesn't understand. Of course, we hope they won't have any children. It's not natural. But we shouldn't be too hard on them if it's only one or two. Both Mr. Voidhead and I are broadminded."

"And where is the wedding to be?"

"Well," I told her, "you must be married in white; it's lucky. So if you can't be married in white at the registrar's, you'll have to go to church, that's all. And you know we had a lovely service when Ethel was cremated." John doesn't mind whether it's church or registry office. "All marriages are sacred to me," he says. The Vicar made a bit of trouble though about him being divorced. Apparently if he had been a bachelor or a widower it would have been different. Funny, isn't it? "No, Mrs. Voidhead," the Vicar said. "I can't possibly officiate. The rules of the English Church about the marriage of divorced persons are quite definite." So he's asked another clergyman, who doesn't believe in the Church, to take the service. But the Vicar will give the address. "We must give them all the encouragement we can," he says. The Reverend Heartiman is the other clergyman's name. Such a nice gentleman. "If God were to come into this room now, Mrs. Voidhead," he said, "He wouldn't agree with *any* of the Churches. He would always agree with me." And he's going to shorten the service as my husband is not very religious."

I asked if Focus might be the first to announce the engagement, so as to bring a breath of romance into our columns.

"Well, Pretty isn't in now," she replied, "but I'm sure she wouldn't mind. We've no objection to the Roman Catholic Religion. After all, you can't help what you are brought up."

True Beauty . . .



Irene Dunne

"I do hope that as I stand before you that you will not look upon me as a movie star but as a Catholic woman, who looks upon you as stars in the firmament of the Church.

"I come from a land of shadows, where an alter-ego is projected on a screen to make it appear as real. But I come to a land of reality, or better still, to the reality of the Communion Rail where I find you, my true sisters in Christ, eating the same Bread, loving the same Saviour and tugging at the same blue mantle of our dear Blessed Mother.

"In the Twentieth Century, all women are interested in glamour and in that they are right. But there are two kinds of glamour—the external and the internal, the latter glamour characterises those who receive Communion, thereby giving a loveliness which fulfils the words of scripture,

An excerpt from the talk given by Miss Irene Dunne at the Thirtieth Annual Communion Breakfast, held at the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, New York City.

'The beauty of the King's daughter is from within'.

"It is very likely that if we could have seen Our Blessed Mother as she walked this earth, that the very last thing we would have noticed about her, would have been her external beauty. The inner grace of the Mystical Rose would have so impressed us that we would have paid no attention to the vase.

"It is interesting that Our Blessed Lord once reprimanded a woman who commented on the external glamour of His Mother. One day while He was preaching, this woman shouted: 'Blessed is the womb which bore Thee and the breast which nursed Thee!' But immediately He lifted her mind to the realm of the *inner beauty* saying: 'Aye! Blessed rather are they who hear the word of God and keep it.'

"Of all my pictures, *none ever did more for me personally than I Remember Mama*. It was a totally unpretentious picture without any props of glamour, which meant that in order to make Mama lovable, I had to be lovable on the inside. There was even the handicap that had to be overcome in the sense that I had to put on weight, and if there is anything a woman loves, it is to be weighed and found wanting. Powder and lipstick were even denied me. I realised that I had to 'make-up' from within what was wanting from without.

"One night, coming home from the studio, I said to myself, 'No woman is really beautiful, if she needs more than two things outside of grace to make her beautiful—soap and water!'

"I wonder then if it is really not our bodies and our faces which make us seem less beautiful than we are—we who have been to Communion. May I conclude with a prayerful petition that I may have glamour as you have glamour; be lovely as you are lovely; beautiful as you are beautiful in grace and above all that I may be a star as you are a star in the crown of Mary. For those stars will never lose their brightness or their glamour in time or eternity with God."

In this article two French Franciscan Friars express their opinion of Rossellini's film

FRANCESCO GIULLARE DI RIO

(Francis, God's Tumbler)

"Clumsy Fingers and Little Flowers"

Rossellini was unable to hide a certain apprehension when he gave a public presentation of his film *Francesco Giullare di Dio* (Francis, God's Tumbler) in Rome last September. The troubled expressions of some French Franciscan Friars from the Campo San Giorgio were noticed by him and he asked: "Allora, che dici, Padre?" (Well, Father, what's your opinion?)

We told Rossellini that we were not a bit impressed by his film. We came to it expecting to see a real Italian St. Francis, played and interpreted by his own countrymen, who, as his heirs, would capture his spirit and enthusiasm; instead we found that it was devoid of that spirituality which alone can explain the life and work of the Friars.

We enjoyed the atmosphere of delightful simplicity which, here and there, surrounds the brethren: a repartee from Brother Juniper, an escapade of the little band of Friars; but as the film progressed we became more and more depressed and sad lest "men of good will" who see this film will get a false idea of Christianity and pass it by.

We were disappointed with the film because it is chopped into eleven unrelated episodes. This technique, which may be passable in a book, brings to a film the impression that the easy way out has been taken by someone who did not understand his subject and was incapable of forming a definite plan with situations and characters firmly knit together. The stories from the Fioretti which have only been waiting for the camera to bring them together into a single splendid "ensemble" remain scattered

all over the place; we are shown a workshop (if not a ruin).

Furthermore, the life of the primitive Franciscan community is incomprehensible to anyone who does not already know the life of St. Francis. From start to finish we watch, in the film, a band of young Friars running and twisting and turning—till we're tired of it—then singing, begging, groaning, laughing or crying—without a clue as to the why or wherefore. The little snatches we get of the preaching or prayers of St. Francis do not permit us to discover the personal drama of the man who one day met Christ and thereafter vowed to follow Him.

St. Francis was not born in poverty; if we do not bear in mind his conversion, we cannot have the vaguest notion of the meaning or the value of his actions or words. The characters of the film are, therefore, condemned to remain pretty puppets, if you like, but too much of the tumblers and not enough of "God's".

Again, why inflict upon us at the beginning a discourse about the state of souls in the thirteenth century while strings of paintings pass across the screen? We had better been shown these thirteenth century folk in their relations with the Friars, instead of being read a page from a history book—albeit illustrated! Even so, apart from a tyrant Niccolao—who is straight out of the hordes of Attila and who might have ended by being impressive, if he had not been shown so grotesque at the beginning—we are reduced to a mere two or three strange characters who go as quickly as they come and are representative of everything or nothing: a donkey-driver, a swineherd and a man who doesn't spare the rod. And why should the scene of the meal with the brethren in the company of Clare and her Sisters have been made so ladylike and dull?

But don't let's get lost in our grumbling about details. From what source did Rossellini draw his documentation? It matters little. The essential thing is not documentation, it's the mentality, the faith, the personality of the man who shapes it into a work. One should not tackle the life of a saint unless one has discovered in oneself, after perhaps years of prayer and meditation, certain echoes, certain impulses of that life. Hagiography is a difficult subject which brooks no artificiality.

"Little flowers," remarked Mauriac apropos of Clérambard, "are not to be mauled by clumsy fingers." The writing of saints' lives—like poetry—requires of those who give themselves to it a certain "state of grace", in the absence of which the would-be hagiographer can only offer us caricatures and counterfeits.

These are hard truths, and criticism is easy. But we were bound to safeguard the true St. Francis.

FR. GERARD HEGO, O.F.M.

FR. DAMIEN VORREUX, O.F.M.

(By courtesy)

FILM STRIP

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Things To Come

Irene Dunne Dances

Irene Dunne, who last danced on the screen in *Show Boat* fourteen years ago, is dancing again in a romantic comedy, *Never A Dull Moment*, with Fred MacMurray, Andy Devine and William Demarest.



Howard Hughes announces that he has secured Clare Boothe Luce's story, "Pilate's Wife", and the services of Rene Clair to direct it. This will be a Wald-Krasna production to be distributed through R.K.O. Radio Pictures.

Hughes had been secretly in negotiation with Mrs. Luce for quite some time, urging her to permit her property to be made into a motion picture rather than a stage play. The story is on a plane never before attempted in a picture contemporary with Jesus, and deals with the reactions of those who participated in the fateful days.

Rene Clair arrived in Hollywood on April 23rd.

Mrs. Luce is now engaged in further research on this project, which has occupied her for the last few years. She will write the screen-play from her own material. Mrs. Luce is the author of "The Women", "Come to the Stable" and many other stage plays and film stories. Rene Clair is the distinguished French director who has gained an enviable international reputation for his work in Hollywood, as well as in Europe.



Abbey Theatre Player Goes West

Cyril Cusack, who is 35-years-old and who has played in the Abbey Theatre for 15 years, has gone to Hollywood to co-star with Charles Laughton and Jane Wyman in *The Blue Veil*.



Howard Hughes has secured Alan Young, recently voted television's best actor of the year in America, to portray Androcles in the Gabriel Pascal production of George Bernard Shaw's classic comedy *Androcles and the Lion*, for R.K.O. Radio. Young joins a cast which includes Jean Simmons, Robert Newton, George Sanders and James Donald.

The Influence of Hollywood

By MERVYN McPHERSON

The word "Hollywood" has the same effect on some Englishmen today as the word "Rome" used to have on the old Dissenters; and still has on a few scattered followers of Mr. Kensit, and many widely spread followers of Messrs. Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Co.

For this, Hollywood can largely blame itself: its fabulous and very great achievements—which have led to the inevitable jealousies in less successful centres of film production—at least as much as its not inconsiderable gaucheries.

Obvious Truism

To myself, an Englishman with a bit of Scottish and Irish blood to make up a typical racial mixture, and with 30 years' experience of the promotion of Hollywood films in Great Britain, it seems almost too obvious a truism to say that the motion picture industry could not exist in this country today, in a form capable of giving entertainment and relaxation to an average public of something like twelve to fifteen million people a week, were it not for the pioneer work Hollywood did in the past; and is continuing to do today, despite difficulties sometimes caused by faults of its own making, but more often by the crushing burden of taxation, quota and other restrictive laws and practices, imposed on films, particularly in this country.

To assume, therefore, as some apparently sane critics do, that everything emanating from Hollywood is the work either of sinister perverts or of half wits is as silly as to imagine everything that comes from it is all-wonderful and all-glamorous.

Beginning of Hollywood Tradition

Actually the great Hollywood tradition began while Hollywood was still little more than a country village. The first of the real American pioneers was

D. W. Griffith, who made most of his films in Mamaroneck, New York State.

His pictures, notably *The Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance*, *Way Down East* and *Orphans of the Storm*, established the full length film, as opposed to the one- or two-reeler; and the cinema screen as an art medium capable also of having profound historical, political and moral significance.

Incidentally, whether he was showing us ancient Babylon or modern America, Griffith never failed to preach his crusade against intolerance, with almost evangelical fervour.

Having revolutionised film production, Griffith and his advisers proceeded to do the same for its distribution and exhibition. I publicised his brilliant melodrama *Way Down East* in 1921 at the old Empire (before it was rebuilt).

Although, of course, innumerable films, both British and American, had been made and shown before that time, it was our belief that, in England at least, they were not taken seriously either as art or entertainment. People dropped into the local cinema (or "fleapit", as it was all too often called), for a snooze, or a cuddle, or perhaps for a good laugh at a Chaplin film. That was about all, except that the youngsters very properly adored their "Westerns".

To implement our belief, we took great pains to describe *Way Down East* as a "wordless play", to advertise it in the theatre instead of the film columns of the papers, and to invite several thousands of regular theatre-goers to see it.

Most of the latter had never seen a film before, except perhaps at the end of a music hall performance. Many of them became and remain ardent film "fans".

Pioneer work was also done by the Griffith and other American organisations in providing first class orchestras, and highly skilled "effects"



Mervyn McPherson with Ann Blyth

men, to accompany films. The work was carried on in the provinces by "road - showing" (taking over "legitimate" theatres or town halls for the picture, and providing our own orchestra and "effects").

Great Film Pioneer

Another great film pioneer, to whom I can pay personal tribute, was Marcus Loew, principal founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Having, from the smallest possible beginnings, built up a great network of cinemas, he characteristically decided—because he could not get enough pictures worthy, in his opinion, of being shown in them—to start his own production company.

It produced a large number of successful films; but Loew wanted to make an epic (and he meant an EPIC) about the first world war. He engaged an unknown and eccentric young Irish director, Rex Ingram, and two previously obscure players, Rudolph Valentino and Alice Terry, to head the cast of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. It cost a huge fortune, even for Hollywood, and most of Marcus Loew's friends "wrote him off" as (a) mad and (b) broke, or about to be—for war films were at that time deemed to be "box-office poison".

The important British distributor who handled Metro films at that time said he'd be so-and-soed if he'd handle a war picture finishing up in a so-and-so graveyard; and it remained in his vaults for many months.

Then Loew came to London, took things into his own hands by renting the Palace Theatre, and engaging his own staff (of whom I was lucky enough to be one of the first two). In the event, *The Four Horsemen* proved an enormous success, which was shortly followed by an even greater one in *Ben-Hur*, which ran for a year at the Tivoli.

Coming of the Talkies

That's enough—I hope not too much—about the silent past.

When talkies came, Hollywood within a few years was filming Dickens (*David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities*), Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*), Jane Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*), Kipling (*Captains Courageous*), Rudolf Besier (*The Barretts of Wimpole Street*), and

works by almost every contemporary British and American author of note, including such film classics as *Trader Horn*, *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *The Good Earth*.

The opposition will undoubtedly say that these were the big, spectacular films which Hollywood was able to make because of its money bags. But Hollywood also made thoughtful, experimental pictures like O'Neill's *Stranger Interlude* and *Ah, Wilderness!* and the profoundly significant *Boys' Town* and *Men of Boys' Town*.

When Naziism and Dictatorship began to bestride the world, it made a notable series of anti-Nazi films, both before and after war began. While America was still nominally at peace, it made pictures like *Mrs. Miniver* which, at the urgent request of the British Ministry of Information, was rushed into general release because of the effect it was expected to have—and in fact did have—on American public opinion.

In Britain, during the war, *Gone with the Wind* ran for four consecutive years in London. There and throughout the country it and many other Hollywood films brought blessed relaxation and forgetfulness of present dangers and troubles to millions of picturegoers.

What Has Hollywood Done?

Again I anticipate the opposition's question: "But what has Hollywood done since the war?"

First, I should like to interpolate that no one is more appreciative than I am of the magnificent pictures which Britain, France and Italy have made in the last few years. But these pictures, as the facts have proved, were not numerically sufficient to fill even half the British cinemas for a quarter of the time.

And meanwhile Hollywood has continued to make films like *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Johnny Belinda*, *Red River*, *The Yearling*, *The Seventh Cross*, among many others which were really worth while; innumerable musicals of which a considerable proportion have given enjoyment to innumerable people, and deserve to; and, of course, films of especial interest to Catholics like *Song of Bernadette*, *The Bells of St. Mary's* and *Going My Way*.

THE ART DIRECTOR

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

A "scene" on the stage is a "set" on the screen, and when it is an exterior, it becomes a "location", but whichever or whatever it is, the Art Director is responsible for it. He is a cross between an interior decorator, connoisseur, period furniture expert, artist and architect. At the lowest level, his job is to provide a background for characters. At the highest level, it is to create sets which shall become an integral part of the story. Broadly speaking, there are three types of sets—normal interiors, normal exteriors, and abnormal / fantastic / symbolic interiors. As the most numerous are, of course, normal interiors, let us study them in a new way, by separating them from the characters who appear in them—a thing one never does whilst watching a film, because attention is primarily concentrated on the people, the sets being seen more or less unconsciously. But if those sets were out of character—too exaggerated, poorly constructed—one would become conscious of them at once, and enjoyment of the film would be marred. Now whether the Art Director has to design a kitchen, ballroom or cellar, the set must appear to be absolutely real; that is, a *permanent* place in which the characters have spent years of their lives. Consequently, he has to become thoroughly familiar with the characteristics of the characters. If the set is Mrs. Brown's drawing room, every picture, vase and rug must be just the articles which Mrs. Brown would buy, maybe in good taste, or extremely bad taste. Whether a room be squalid or rich, immaculate or untidy, it must seem to have been created by the character living in it, and not by the Art Director. If he designed sets to please himself, then the characters would be merely superimposed on them, and even the most undiscerning film-goer would sense the unreality of the picture so presented.

Normal exteriors are usually selected by the Art Director or his assistant. Location hunting is an art in itself, the

tracking down of natural scenes which shall exactly fit a story being no simple task. However, whether interior or exterior, the work of the Art Director must never dominate the screen, but always remain in the "background"—unless, of course, the story demands that some feature of a room shall have dramatic significance.

But it is when we turn to fantasy and symbolism we find backgrounds coming into the foreground and often sharing honours with the stars. The sets in, say, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and in some of the major American musical features, present highly imaginative sets which intentionally dominate the screen from time to time, dwarfing the characters and becoming part of the story. That old German classic, *The Cabinet of Doctor Calagari*, pointed to a world of screen fantasy waiting to be developed, and recent productions, such as those I have named, reveal the Art Director at his brilliant best.

The majority of people are unconscious of his existence, for, like his creations, he remains in the background, but he deserves to share honours equally with the Director of the characters. His powers of perception are sharpened to the finest point. Every room is, to him, a mirror reflecting the characters of the people inhabiting it. When you visit people do you carry away detailed impressions of their homes—of evidence of good or bad taste—of how limited space is artistically used—of flower arrangement—of heavy overpowering rooms—of orderliness or chaos? Or are you entirely insensitive to environment (an astonishing number of people are)?

Lastly, there is another field which has received less attention than others—the natural religious background—offered by the interiors and exteriors of churches—intact and in ruins—of religious sculpture and murals—all providing inspiring backgrounds against which to unfold the factual religious films of the future.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*



Ray Milland



Patricia Roc



CIRCLE OF DANGER

Starring: Ray Milland, Patricia Roc, Marius Goring, Hugh Sinclair, Nauntun Wayne.
Producer: Joan Harrison.
Director: Jaques Tourneur.
Presented by David E. Rose and released by R.K.O. Radio Pictures. *Certificate: U.*
Category: A. Running time: 86 minutes.



Will these men kill each other?

An American film, this, made in England, and made very much the English way, with real people and real places, and the common touch. The motive in making the film so unelaborate may have been economy,

but the effect achieved is altogether pleasing and natural.

The story is simple, and if it is on the slow side, there is adequate compensation in the quality of the acting. Milland plays the part of an American who sets out for Europe to enquire about the death of his kid brother, who, as a Commando in the British Army, was killed during an attack in the war. The reports of his death led Milland to suspect that all was not on the level. With great difficulty he traces the various surviving members of his brother's company in order to get to the full truth. Thus we have the real people and the real places . . . London, South Wales, Hammersmith, Richmond Park, Covent Garden, the bonnie Highlands, Teddington Lock.

Refreshing

While credits are due to all the cast, both great and small, Marius Goring, in a minor part, gives us something verging on the brilliant.

This film is unusually calm for a thriller. Not that it was not exciting in patches, and at the end. You can enjoy it and be interested throughout, and can emerge from the cinema, not tensed up with nervous exhaustion, but pleasantly and happily refreshed.

G.

THE GALLOPING MAJOR

Starring: Basil Radford, Jimmy Hanley, Janette Scott. **Producer:** Monja Danischewsky. **Director:** Henry Cornelius. **Distributors:** Independent Films. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 82 minutes.

It is a pity that the expression "good, clean fun" has come to such a poor pass. This film is full of good, clean and very clever fun with a Dickensian flavour. It is unlikely that we are as nice as the script makes us out to be, but they say that it was Dickens who created most of our modern Christmas heartiness and there is no reason why the adventures of the Galloping Major should not work wonders with our manners and outlook now. It is a friendly England that is portrayed, full of characters one would dearly love to think were real. The story is all about a syndicate made up

of "real folks" who bought a somewhat skittish horse. It would be wrong to say whether it wins the National or not but the finish is as good a combination of the happy ending and realism as one can hope to see, with just the necessary dash of improbability shot through it. The whole family must go to see this. What a good idea to bring it out during the festival of Britain. I was dreading an essay in crime or a deep dive into the unconscious.

J. C.

HOLLYWOOD STORY

Starring: Richard Conte and Julia Adams. **Producer:** Leonard Goldstein. **Director:** William Castle. **A Universal-International Picture. Certificate:** A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 77 minutes.

Set in Hollywood, this story still manages to attain something of novelty, though it never reaches any peak of excitement. It is essentially a quiet thriller, but a good story, which carries one through to the end without too much clue as to the identity of the original murderer.

Such set-ups as these always leave me wondering how or if the American Police work. We find this producer (Richard Conte) who begins to unravel a murder story which the cops have failed to solve. Though they are not too pleased about him doing it, he goes ahead and shares clues with Lt. Lennox of the Police (Richard Egan), who, though vaguely hostile, does not mind turning up when things get too tough for a mere amateur sleuth.

More hostile is the original author of the trouble, who takes pot shots at an unconcerned Richard Conte through a window and then retires to his hide-out. In time, everyone concerned in making the film of the murder comes under suspicion as having been connected with the murdered man. Naturally, it is a female of the species who has caused all the trouble, and her daughter who is no less beautiful (Julia Adams) proceeds to cause more.

But amateur sleuth is too much for amateur criminal, to say nothing of professional investigator. He is quicker at clues, in this case a medallion of St. Clare, which leads to a concealed identity, and also quicker on the draw,

which leads to another killing on the stage-set of the original one, but this time a killing which settles the case.

The whole film falls on Richard Conte, and if you like him and his acting, you will enjoy the film tremendously. It is certainly good entertainment though not an outstanding film.

M.

FOLLOW THE SUN

Starring: Glenn Ford, Anne Baxter, with June Havoc. **Producer:** Samuel G. Engel. **Director:** Sidney Lanfield. 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate: U. Category: C. Running time: 94 minutes.*

You might almost call this a lesson on how to play golf with a straight bat. Golf like Peace hath its victories, but it is rather like War when you come to professional tournament levels. Glenn Ford in the part of Ben Hogan—who, it appears, is a real champion—so concentrates on his game in the long struggle that he is known as the Iceberg. This, by some strange canon of the sport, comes to be regarded by Ben as not keeping faith with his public; and the story tells how he won his way first to the top of the tree and then, more slowly, into the great big possessive, but apparently discriminating, heart of the populace. This latter success comes when he makes a determined come back after a shocking motoring accident which had left him a cripple.

His wife (Anne Baxter) is what any man's wife should be—an inspiration to his golf. But let us be fair: she has a sweet strength of her own. And the two do present a picture of a marriage loyal and unrancorous which is charming.

The supporting pair (June Havoc and Dennis O'Keefe) provide their own problems, one of them unrealised. This is that she had "married" him after a Reno divorce. This fact adds or subtracts nothing, being simply a natural piece of background. It is always alarming that way and it is always something we must react to.

Otherwise you may like this tale of what it takes to be a popular golf champion.

X.

MAD WEDNESDAY

Starring: Harold Lloyd, with Frances Ramsden, Jimmy Conlin, Raymond Welburn, Arline Judge, Edgar Kennedy, Franklin Pangborn, Lionel Stander, Margaret Hamilton. **Director:** Preston Sturges. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 77 minutes.*

Harold Lloyd is a name to conjure with. It conjures up memories of the days of the Keystone Cops and the Mack Sennett bathing girls, when the same actors could make a comedy a week. Mr. Lloyd was in films with Bebe Daniels when she was sixteen and even before that he appeared under the name of Winkle.

Now he emerges after many years of retirement. It is remarkable how little he has changed. The same might be said about some of the material with which he is associated. A lion still gets loose. People still nearly fall out of windows high above the street.

Mad Wednesday is presented as a sequel to *The Freshman*, a silent film of the 1920s, and has as its introduction a long extract from the earlier picture. The best part is that which centres round the first drink of the hitherto teetotal hero. (This owes a great deal to the barman, excellently played by Edgar Kennedy, familiar from a number of short domestic farces.)

The film is not successful as a whole. But it avoids being tedious since one is always expecting something really funny to happen. And sometimes it does.

Q.

A NIGHT AT THE PALLADIUM

APRIL 9TH, 1951

Clang, Clang, clang went the trolley,
Ding, ding, ding, went the bell,
Flat on her back fell Judy
And the audience applauded
like ———.

QCOMBER.

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

Starring: Moira Shearer, Robert Helpmann, Leonide Massine and Robert Rounseville, Pamela Brown, Ludmilla Tcherina, Ann Ayers. **Producers and Directors:** Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. **Conductor:** Sir Thomas Beecham, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. **English librettist:** Denis Arundell. **Choreographer:** Frederick Ashton. **Distributors:** British Lion. In technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 127 minutes.

The original "clerihew" about Hilaire Belloc refers to his books as being all of different kinds. The same might be said of films by Powell and Pressburger. Their subjects have included Anglican nuns, the life of the world to come, fox hunting and the French Revolution à l'Orczy. In none of these spheres did they seem entirely at home. More effective was their excursion into ballet, and the trail blazed by *The Red Shoes* has been followed considerably further in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. And the first three stars are the same: two shining lights of contemporary British ballet and a very live link with the golden days of Diaghilev.

Substantially Successful

But *The Tales of Hoffmann* is opera. An opera with an incidental ballet is familiar enough. Here is something quite different and new, an attempt to overcome the difficulty of transferring to the screen something so comparatively static as opera by fusing it throughout with ballet and mime. This interesting and rather complicated experiment is, in my opinion, substantially successful. It means that the voices of invisible singers must sometimes be used. Only Robert Rounseville and Ann Ayers are qualified to sing their parts. I do not find dubbing as objectionable as some people do. (But perhaps I am biased since my own voice has been heard in more than one feature film when other lips were seen to move.)

Another interesting development is that whereas *The Red Shoes* told a

contemporary story in which long sequences of ballet were encased, here the film does not go much beyond the opera. The work of educating picture-goers proceeds and is to be commended. And it proceeds slowly. Though *The Tales of Hoffmann* is the last and least trivial of Offenbach's works, it is not so grand opera. (I believe the composer would have been quite surprised to find it treated on such a magnificent scale.) All the same I wonder how it will be received by those who are not at home among the conventions and the idiom of opera and ballet. I can well imagine some people—the sort who will get Hoffmann and Helpmann all mixed up—complaining that they had to wait nearly an hour before the Barcarolle and then the words were not "Night of Stars and Night of Love". Also it is unfortunate that the last act is the least interesting. Feeling sleepy during this I accused myself of lack of culture until I heard that a Balliol scholar had dropped right off in the course of the film. And it is most remarkable how persistently the word "exhausting" has been used to describe it; rarely, if ever, has there been such unanimous use of one word by so many critics.

The colours and designs incline, for the most part, to the flamboyant tradition to which the ideas of artistic simplicity and restraint are alien. Sometimes, however, there are touches of modernity and in the disintegration of the doll Olympia even something approaching surrealism.

I thought the tuning up of the orchestra during the credits an excellent idea. But it went on too long. (So does the film.) I am not so sure about the artistic propriety of the appearance of Sir Thomas Beecham at the end, but his "potted" version of the score, to which the action was fitted, was excellently played and recorded.

The small part played by Pamela Brown was as effective as it was unexpected. Her expression conveyed so well the unspoken comment: "Poor old Hoffmann! Will he never learn?" For his tales are cautionary and seem to have for their moral: Don't fall in love with a doll, a courtesan or a tubercular soprano—a blessing I wish you all.



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YOU'RE IN THE NAVY NOW

Starring: Gary Cooper, Jane Green, with Millard Mitchell, Eddie Albert. **Producer:** Fred Kohlmar. **Director:** Henry Hathaway. 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 93 minutes.

Transatlantic "pep" films for an American public can resemble good local wines which don't "travel" so well. Gary Cooper is a volunteer officer in the U.S. Navy, put in command of an experimental (top secret) vessel. All the ship's company are also inexperienced with the exception of the bos'n's mate (Millard Mitchell). The story, very simply, is of the successive failures of the experiment and of the eventual though very gradual emergence of an esprit de corps on board.

The feminine interest is reduced to the minimum. This minimum is Jane Green in her non-exacting rôle of the skipper's wife. There is a "wuffy" sort of admiral, who might be described by some as a poppet.

To have the maximum effect, "pep" must be lightened with humour. So there is humour.

I have no doubt of the harmless quality of this film.

X.

ABBOT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN

Director: Charles Lamont. **Distributors:** G.F.D. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 82 minutes.

Those who like Abbot and Costello should know that this, though not their best film, has plenty of characteristic comic situations derived from the idea that, as a couple of detectives, they are trying to prove the innocence of a boxer wrongfully accused of murder. The boxer complicates things somewhat by injecting himself with the serum originally tried on H. G. Wells' invisible man. The best moments are when Costello (the fat one) fights a boxing match aided (sometimes) by the invisible pugilist.

V.

WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS

Starring: Dana Andrews, Gene Tierney. **Producer and Director:** Otto Preminger. 20th Century-Fox. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 95 minutes.

This is a disappointing film, a thriller which fails to thrill. The audience see the murder committed (accidentally) quite early on, and for the rest of the time watch the Police and others trying to solve the mystery. The plot is ingenious, and if only we had been kept in ignorance of the facts and had to work it out (so to speak) with the Police, the solution would have been thrilling indeed.

Dana Andrews and Gene Tierney run the correct gamut of emotions as the tough detective who gets himself into a sack of trouble and the girl who sticks to him through it all. There are far too many close-ups of Mr. Andrews registering the emotions aforesaid.

The ending, apart from the discovery of the murderer's identity, is stupidly inconclusive: it is irritating to follow the man through so many troubles and all those close-ups, and then not to be told precisely what happens to him. I hazard the suggestion that he ends on the sidewalk.

T. C. F.

THE GREAT CARUSO

Starring: Mario Lanza, Ann Blyth, Dorothy Kirsten. **Producer:** Joe Pasternak. **Director:** Richard Thorpe. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 109 minutes.

With his film *Hamlet*, Laurence Olivier brought to the multitudes who go to the pictures the opportunity to know, appreciate and love the drama. What he did for the drama the Powell-Pressburger team did for the ballet. *Red Shoes* became a best seller and *Tales of Hoffmann* continues to draw the crowds. And now M.-G.-M., with *The Great Caruso*, are bringing to the multitudes the riches of the operas.

After the press show, I caught myself uncharitably describing this film as "Vox et praeterea nihil" ("a voice and nothing else"). I was not trying to be facetious. I was not feeling ill-



Caruso sings for pennies



He sings in opera



He is snubbed



He is acclaimed a success

disposed towards the film. On the contrary, I enjoyed it very much. I think I was trying to say that sight, movement and story had been sacrificed for sound.

As a biography it is much too loose and sketchy, although we are given an insight into Caruso's origins and background and the shots of Naples where he was born are visually pleasing, but you get the impression that all this is just a means to an end, which is to display Mario Lanza's mighty voice. As an operatic film it is rich, royal and joyful, the sort of film that makes you happy. Mario Lanza is a happy artiste, his voice has quality, range, power, resonance and resilience; he makes you believe that he loves singing better than anything else in the world. What a pleasure it was to

hear extracts from such masters as Verdi and Puccini.

Sentiment sometimes runs into sentimentality and I have no doubt that Caruso singing Gounod's "Ave Maria" with choir boys in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, during High Mass will make the "arty" boys wince and wiggle; however, this particular sequence is worth noticing for it has its own particular value; one of the boys who sings is no Ganymede, but he has a voice which is outstandingly pure, beautiful and individual.

Among those who contribute their quota to the musical success of this film Ann Blyth deserves a special word of praise. She looks well, sings well and acts well.

E.

TERESA

Starring: Pier Angeli, John Ericson, Patricia Collinge, Aldo Silvani and Franco Interlenghi. **Director:** Fred Zinnemann. **Distributors:** M. - G. - M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A.

Here is a film which will repay much thought and study. The Censor's Certificate carries the hint that it is "more suitable for adults". This is not a warning to prudes to keep away, but a suggestion that those who seek primarily to be painlessly and effortlessly entertained may not see all that is being put before them on the screen. It is a film for adults, that is to say, for people with grown-up minds who are able to appreciate truth and goodness and beauty though they be decked in rags and live in broken-down houses.

The story is simply told. Philip, a timorous, diffident G.I., meets Teresa, a young, naïve but self-confident Italian when he is billeted on her family during the war. They marry. He

returns to New York but is afraid to tell his possessive, jealous mother about his Italian wife. When she eventually arrives, the mother does her best to separate them. Lacking self-confidence, Philip allows Teresa to leave him, but finally finds courage to begin to set up his own modest home when he hears that Teresa has borne him a son.

There is not space enough even to mention all the tantalising ideas that flow from a perusal of this film. Perhaps the most intriguing is the sense of open-air spaciousness which the camera, under the direction of William J. Miller, captures, even for the New York scenes in Central Park. Naturally, the open-air locations in Italy have that glorious atmosphere of actuality which is common to most Italian-made films, but it is rarely that one escapes from the shut-in, artificial studio environment in American films. Fred Zinnemann, the maker of the film, learnt with *The Search* that the special contribution which the camera can make to life is to let it at liberty among real people and places and happenings. Then it tells its story truthfully. Once set it up in an elaborately dressed studio and it can only record what is artificial.



Pier Angeli



John Ericson

Another interesting speculation derives from the opening of the film where Philip is talking to a psychiatrist. He reels off a string of modern clichés: "I'm all mixed up." "I feel all alone." "They don't understand me." One has an impression of the psychiatrist as a father confessor and it is clear that the function of the priest as physician of the soul has now, in an unchristian civilisation, been largely taken over by the lay-practitioner. A curious secondary problem: is Philip a Catholic? He instinctively makes the sign of the Cross when being married in Italy but his New York home and his subsequent attitude give no further corroboration.

A score of questions are posed by the war scenes in Italy. The casual, other-worldly, air of the soldiers as they ply their soldierly profession, compared with their very down-to-earth eagerness to fraternise with the local girls. The family spirit underlined by the almost ritual passing of wine around the circle to celebrate the acceptance of Philip as a friend in the family. The permission sought and granted for Teresa to "walk out" with Philip but ten-year-old little brother is sent to accompany them as chaperon!

Pier Angeli who plays the rôle of Teresa is, at present, an unspoiled, self-confident, exceptionally photogenic seventeen-year-old child who looks less than her age. How long she will be able to withstand the baleful materialism of the publicity machine remains to be seen. The personality that comes so forcefully across the screen may be strong enough to resist the corrosive influence. Following upon her delightful acting in *Domani e troppo tardi*, her work in *Teresa* suggests that here we have the makings of a first-class screen actress.

John Ericson, who plays Philip, is a likeable and competent youngster, but he is quite outclassed by the girl. Patricia Collinge gives a strong study of the possessive mother, and an unusually thoughtful and successful piece of underplaying is Richard Bishop's part as the ineffectual, weakening father of Philip.

This is a film to see, to enjoy, to think about and then to see again.

V.

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THE SCARF

Starring: John Ireland, Mercedes McCambridge and Emllyn Williams. **Director:** E. A. Dupont. **Distributors:** United Artists. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 90 minutes approx.

A convict makes his getaway from the Californian State Asylum for Criminal Lunatics. He is sheltered by a philosophically - inclined turkey farmer. He has lost all memory of the crime he was charged with. He *thinks* he must be innocent because *he has no sense of guilt.* (My italics.) An English psychiatrist comes on the scene, a former friend of the criminal. His first remark is to rebuff someone who laughs at him. He says he is allergic to laughter. It takes the rest of the film to work round to the point where it is shown that the English psychiatrist committed the crime. If you can bear the suspense, perhaps you may care for the film for the sake of some imitation tough acting on the part of Mercedes McCambridge and some pseudo-philosophical grimacing on the part of James Barton as the turkey farmer. For the rest, I think films about psychiatrists ought to be banned for at least seven years. In the meantime, script-writers who want to deal with the subject might take some lessons in human behaviour and the treatment necessary for its vagaries.

V.

THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR

Starring: James Whitmore and Nancy Davis. **Director:** William J. Wellman. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 75 minutes approx.

What would happen if at 8-30 one Tuesday evening God's Voice were suddenly heard by all men in their own language on every broadcast programme throughout the world, and then for a

week was heard every evening at the same time? Antecedently one would dread Hollywood to suggest an answer, but their answer in *The Next Voice You Hear* will probably surprise you. The subject is treated sensitively and with intelligent imagination. Their "VOICE" does not speak in favour of the Church. It only emphasises our duties to men (for God's sake?), but it does suggest some practical and apposite applications of charity. "The world" naturally calls for a Sign, and the sign given is that of Carlyle: "*The age of miracles, as it ever was, now is*". The morality of the film is excellent in the sense that such wrong-doing as is portrayed carries its own punishment and shows the need for forgiveness. One regrets that the Voice occasionally lapses into such human language as "*I gather*", but there is nothing blasphemous, or sacrilegious, or objectionable. It is a film for the family to see together, and it may well give rise to a discussion which will help to bring more Christian Charity into family relations.

T. T.

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NEW RELIGIOUS DOCUMENTARIES

TRIPTYCH

Starring: Benjamino Gigli. **Producer:** G. Parenti. **Distributors:** Archway Films Ltd. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 20 minutes.

The Society of St. Paul, a Religious Institute composed of priests and lay-brothers, was founded in Italy in 1914 with the object of spreading the Gospel by means of the modern methods of propaganda. The Press, the Cinema, the Radio, are, therefore, the natural milieux for their apostolate. His Eminence Cardinal Griffin gave permission for a foundation of the Society in London some three years back. The radio is closed to them as a means of spreading their message in this country, but from the beginning they set to work to provide an Italian language newspaper for their numerous fellow-countrymen. This has met with considerable success. Now they have brought out their first film. It is a two-reel, technicolor treatment, in the manner now made familiar by the Italian art films, of three of the most famous of the Italian Old Masters. We are shown Crivelli's *Annunciation*, Botticelli's *Nativity* and Mantegna's *Crucifixion* in such a way that they really spring to a life unsuspected by even the most devoted of the art-gallery habitués. Here the camera comes into its own and shows what can be done by a sensitive artist using the camera as a kind of microscope, revealing hidden beauties and significant points not available in any other way.

The colour is delicate and the general effect most pleasing. The film differs from other similar "art films" in that it assembles the three paintings in the course of a short lecture on the music of the composers whose work accompanies the film; Bach, as interpreted by Gounod in the "Ave Maria"; Rossini, whose "Cujus Animam" underlines the *Crucifixion*. The "Adeste Fidelis" is fitted to the Botticelli. The three airs are sung with magnificent bravura by a mellow Gigli, who personally appears at the piano in a room decorated with musical paraphernalia.

The whole thing is stirring and devotional at the same time though I, for one, could have done with something less militaristic in shape than Rossini's robust aria to pick out the Mantegna. However, these are questions of taste about which we are warned not to dispute. This is a film to ask for at your local cinema. As it is a "short", they may well risk it and as it is made under the normal commercial conditions demanded by the unions there should be no difficulty about its inclusion in an entertainment programme. In any case, it is a film well worth taking trouble to see.

V.

NOBLE MISSION

French Documentary. Director: Maurice Thery. Available in 16mm. from Bro. Dennis Robert, F.S.C., St. Joseph's College, Beulah Hill, S.E.19. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 25 minutes.

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools are this year celebrating the tercentenary of the birth of their Founder, St. John Baptist de la Salle. These celebrations include an exhibition which will be seen in various parts of the country and also a documentary film account, made in France, of the life and work of the Brothers. This film, *Noble Mission*, is beautifully photographed and assembled and though, inevitably, it has a strongly French flavour about it, does much to inform the audience of the extensive and efficient work for God and youth of these devoted Brothers.

It is even more valuable as yet another example of the use of film for the spreading of the kingdom of God. The field is so vast and the labourers so comparatively few that it is a tremendous pity that religious people are still so ignorant of the possibilities of the cinema in aiding them to do their work. Of course, they are frightened off, to some extent by the commercial approach to the problem, but, we are convinced, the day is not too far off when a group of dedicated film technicians, bound to their craft for the love of God, will be providing films of

professional quality, made without any other consideration than that they are contributing to the glory of God and the benefit of humanity.

Meanwhile, here is a step in the right direction and Bro. Dennis Robert will

be glad to bring his film around to your district to help you to understand the breadth and the depth of the work which St. de la Salle did for the same sublime objects.

V.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

DONNE SENZA NOME

(Unwanted Women)

Starring: Simone Simon, Valentina Cortese, Vivi Gici and Françoise Rosay. **Director:** Geza Radvanyi. **Distributors:** London Films. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 97 minutes.

Films which deal with war and its aftermath fall into various categories. There are those which sensationalise their subject and seem to be using the misfortunes of men to gain success at the box-office. Others appear to lean heavily upon political or national prejudices. Yet others take advantage of contemporary fashions in strife to place their stars, whether male or female, against the most lurid backgrounds.

It is only rarely that one detects a note of true humanity in a film which treats of man's inhumanity to man. *Donne Senza Nome* is such a film. It is not pretty to look at, still less to think about. Nevertheless, for those who realise the power and the duty of the cinema to focus attention upon international problems, this film is worth looking for. It is a pity that it contains elements which will enable the unscrupulous or unimaginative publicity agent to attract merely sensation-hunting patrons, but that is inevitable in a film of this nature and does not detract from its essential merit.

It is the story of the concentration camp for displaced women situated in Italy near Trieste, and populated by French, German, Polish, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech and Yugoslavic women who, for one reason or another, are without identity papers and are, therefore, not so much imprisoned within the camp, as herded there for their own security by the inability of the politicians to arrive at a sane and human solution of their problem.

The central character is a Yugoslav (Valentina Cortese), who is determined that her baby shall be born in freedom outside the camp. Her efforts to escape do not succeed and she dies while giving birth to her child. The baby is saved from being sent to the orphanage when a kindly Italian guard adopts him and gives him a name and a country and the opportunity to live and grow, to which all human beings are entitled.

There are characters and scenes which are repulsive, but they are an integral part of the whole picture and could not be omitted without destroying the point of the story. The direction is firm and seldom overdone. The strongest scene is the attempted escape of the women and the measures adopted by the guards to prevent them. The quiet talk of the kindly Commandant (Mario Ferrari), who explains why they are safer within the camp gates, is very moving. The cynical interjections of Françoise Rosay, as a Belgian countess, the saucy disregard of propriety by Simone Simon as a French girl who gets herself a husband and so liberty, the resigned devotion to duty of Gino Cervy as the officer who adopts the baby, all combine to give a remarkably restrained and credible picture of one of the most heart-rending problems left in the path of the war that has never ended.

V.

LA RONDE

Starring: Simone Signoret, Simone, Danielle Darrieux, Jean Louis Barrault, Gerard Philipe and Anton Walbrook. **Director:** Max Ophuls. **Distributors:** G.C.T. (Distributors) Ltd. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 125 minutes.

This film has taken three awards: as the best French film this year at

Montevideo; for the best scenario and for the best decor at Venice last year. I find it difficult to accept any of these awards as well-merited. The decor is Hollywood fantastical, the scenario, evidently set on getting as many bedroom scenes as possible into one film, assumes that Destiny (personified by Anton Walbrook under a number of disguises) arranges illicit love affairs between virtuous and vicious indiscriminately. The street woman, the soldier, the shop girl, the poet, the actress and the count are all involved in a roundabout of "amour", in which the count finds himself eventually accepting the attentions of the street woman, which was where we came in and so we go out.

As for being the best French film, the only thing truly French about it is the galaxy of talent, including Jean Louis Barrault, Gerard Philipe, Odette Joyeux and others, so dreadfully wasted.

One can admire the polish of some of the technique without conceding that it is either typically French in the prize class; or worthy of the talent of Max Ophuls, the Saarbrücken-born maker of *Letter From An Unknown Woman*.

V.

CLOCHEMERLE

Starring: Felix Oudart, Brochard, Saturnine Fabre. **Director:** Pierre Chenal. **Distributors:** Blue Ribbon Films. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

Good Friday once was a day on which Christian countries suspended secular pastimes and occupations in order to pay reverence to the Saviour of mankind whose great act of sacrifice that day commemorates. London this year signalled the day by admitting to the West End a film of peculiar vulgarity in which disrespect to religion was a strong element.

It would be easy but unjust to blame the Censor for the contents of this film. At the best of times his task is an unenviable one. It is not his business to express views as to artistic or cultural standards in films. His main business is to safeguard public good order. This he does under three main heads: religion, politics and social order. He is not to be

blamed when a film is moronic any more than he is to be praised if a film is what some people term "broad-minded" (another term in that context for skating on morally thin ice). In neither case has he done more than to assure that the exhibition of a film will not cause a public riot. With regard to *Clochemerle*, one has to be grateful that so much that is offensive to religion has been cut out and if one or two scenes that are verging on the sacrilegious still remain, that is due as much to the natural ignorance of the Censors of the theological implications of the scenes as to the superior professional knowledge of the Catholic, who will instinctively invest such scenes with a significance which the non-Catholic may well fail to notice.

Though it is not the business of the Censor to express opinions about the quality of the film it is certainly the business of the responsible adult cinema-goer to refuse to tolerate on the screens he patronises films that are basically vulgar and coarse.

It will be sufficient to say that the theme of the film is anti-clericalism, symbolised by the erection of a public urinal in the square outside the church. The radicals who use this convenience are opposed by pious and embittered spinsters, who are thus made the protagonists of Religion versus Progress and Commonsense.

It may be that the reading of the book from which this film is derived is capable of providing genuine amusement to adult minds, but the moment it is turned into a film, this unsavoury situation is offered to the salacious sniggering of every Tom, Dick and Harry who thinks that a French film is synonymous with impropriety. An example of this type is the man I heard of who regretted that he did not understand French as he thought that he was "missing something spicy".

In its present version *Clochemerle* labours under two defects. It supposes that religious practice and devotion are the refuge of sex-starved and embittered spinsters who constantly prey upon the innocence and youth of those youngsters likely to find a spouse. It also assumes that the mention and function of micturition is screamingly funny and greatly daring. There is no accounting for tastes, but I imagine

that most of us ceased to think that urination was a subject for humour when we entered our teens.

It is not without significance that

this film is technically second-rate. One or two actors stand out but the whole thing is below standard.

V.

From Our Educational Panel

Some Film Strips for the Teaching of English History

LIBRARIES

B.I.F.—British Instructional Films, Ltd., Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.

C.G.—Common Ground—from Educational Supply Association, 171/181 High Holborn, W.C.1.

G.B.I.—Gaumont British Instructional, Film Library, Aintree Road, Perivale, Middx.

Dawn Trust Film Library, Aylesbury, Bucks.

MEDIEVAL

Cathedrals and Abbeys

B.I.F. No. 154. Price: 10s.

The 41 frames of this strip cover 18 of the cathedrals and abbeys of England, and aims at suggesting the extent of this heritage rather than providing a complete survey of it. The choice of buildings is representative of different periods and places and shows the great range in style of building and wealth of historic and artistic treasures they often contain. Details of sculpture are sometimes provided—Winchester's Norman font, the cloister vaulting of Gloucester, as well as relics of more particular historic interest—the Coronation Chair, Winchester's Mortuary chests and Hereford's famous "Mappa Mundi". In each of the eighteen cathedrals and abbeys at least one view of the exterior is provided and these are sometimes disappointing and usually the result of trying to convey too much in a single frame. The same criticism can be made of

"interior" views where the beauty of the object is sometimes concealed by the angle of the photograph. Nevertheless, this is a strip to be enjoyed by all over 12 for its "general knowledge" value and would be useful as a revision of medieval history.

Canterbury Cathedral

B.I.F. No. 182. Price: 10s.

This film strip presents a complete survey, in 30 frames, of the most interesting features of the cathedral and monastic buildings. In addition to the familiar views of the exterior, nave and crypt, there are some exceptionally good details of the buildings, notably the fan vault of the central tower, the magnificent panelled roof of the Chapter House and the bosses of the cloister vault. A cathedral so rich in associations with saints, kings and pilgrims provides abundant material for the photographer and the selection is representative, covering the structure and decoration of the building, its historic relics and associations. Apart from the general interest and value of this film strip, it contains many illustrations of the chief features of English ecclesiastical architecture.

The English Manor House

B.I.F. No. 183. Price: 10s.

The history of the English manor house as a place of defence and residence is shown in the 39 frames of

the strip showing the exteriors and interiors of some of the best known of these houses and ending with sixteen detailed views of Hatfield House. The term "manor house" extends to such palatial residences as Chatsworth House, but most of the illustrations are of the smaller, more familiar type of country house. The original defensive features such as the curtain walls, moat and towers are shown, but the emphasis throughout is on the manor house as a home. Photographs of Haddon Hall, Montacute House and Compton Wynyates provide details of domestic interest, the chapel, the library, gallery and gardens, and finally Hatfield House is treated in detail both for its historical interest and as an example of the manor house combining elegance with comfort.

This film strip would have most value for older children and would provide a useful introduction to the study of English domestic architecture and furnishing.

The Castle

C.G.A. No. 487. (Colour.) Price: 25s.

A set of attractive drawings reconstructing life in and around a medieval castle in peace and war. The strip itself is not over-loaded with technical detail, and so is mainly suited for young seniors, but very full and valuable notes are provided, giving much interesting information and points for study. The pictures are supplemented by photographs of four or five existing castles, intended to show children what to look for when sight-seeing.

Medieval Building

G.B.I. Price: 15s. each.

1. *The City*. S.11.

A comprehensive survey of an English medieval city, beginning with its siting, design and lay-out, and showing the city walls, bridges, gates and defences, cathedral, guildhall, streets, dwellings, shops and alleys. The illustrations are chiefly from York, and the photography is good.

2. *The Cathedral*. S.12.

A simple introduction to the development of the English Cathedral building,

beginning with the vaulting, and intended to show children what to look for in the interior and exterior. Examples widely chosen and interesting.

3. *The Parish Church*. S.22.

An excellent strip. Very good photographs, useful diagrams and captions designed to show the evolution of the parish church and its place in social life, with just enough detail to arouse interest and desire to find out more. The names of the churches are given in the titles, a point to be specially commended.

4. *The Monastery*. S.59.

Photographs of different parts of a composite monastery, with figures of monks added to recreate monastic life in its natural setting. The photographs are good and representative; the monks are rather blurred and ghostly, but this perhaps serves to give a not inappropriate illusion. No distinction is made between the Benedictines and Cistercians, otherwise the impression is a faithful one.

The Luttrell Psalter

G.B.I. S.20 and 21. Price: 15s. each.

Black and white reproductions of marginal illustrations from this unique record of daily life in the Middle Ages.

Strip I shows the Church, some medieval People, and Agriculture, the farming scenes being especially noteworthy.

Strip 2 shows games and pastimes, and home life.

TUDOR TIMES

The Shakespeare Country

B.I.F. No. 157. Price: 10s.

This is a most attractive and interesting film strip showing the chief scenes of Shakespeare's life and work, together with beautiful views of the countryside and villages familiar to him. The first twenty frames show the places and relics most closely connected with Shakespeare's life—the parish church with baptismal font and parish register recording his birth and death, the grammar school and his desk, and the cottages of Anne Hathaway and

Mary Arden. The views of interiors and relics shown have an interest apart from their Shakespearean associations and much can be learnt of fifteenth and sixteenth century rural architecture and domestic life from the carefully preserved contents of the houses—the old plates, furniture, ovens and farming implements. The remaining frames of the strip are devoted to the villages Shakespeare knew and American links with Shakespeare and ends with a view of the Memorial Theatre.

This strip could be used for a number of purposes for children of 12 and over and would be an attractive introduction to the study of a Shakespeare play.

Tudor Life

C.G.P. No. 526. Price : 6s. 6d.

This is a short "Pilot" strip of eleven drawings illustrating various aspects of Tudor life—printing, a grammar school, a country mansion, a tournament, the playhouse, a dockside. These are followed by some notes and questions and references. The pictures are only indifferently good, however, though children might find them useful in individual work.

The Tower of London

C.G.A. No. 52. Price : 15s.

This is a most interesting strip, formed of photographs of the Tower as it is today, combined with prints and drawings which tell of its history, the uses to which it has been put, and the many famous and tragic names associated with it. The strip could be used to recall former visits, or to prepare for a future one. It would be a useful addition to a series illustrating castle-building.

MODERN TIMES

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Common Ground. Price : 15s. each.

A series illustrating the lives and achievements of famous English Statesmen and national figures from contemporary portraits, prints, cartoons and other material, all supplemented by comprehensive notes.

Sir Robert Walpole. C.G.B. 344.

Colourful, vigorous and alive.

Chatham. C.G.B. 345.

Concentrates on the conduct of the wars rather than their outcome.

Younger Pitt. C.G.B. 346.

Achievements of his Ministry and early battles of the war. Rather colourless.

Wellington. C.G.B. 385.

Very good.

Nelson. C.G.A. 217.

Very good.

Disraeli. C.G.A. 256.

Interesting, especially "Punch" cartoons.

Introduction to the Industrial Revolution

Common Ground. Price : 15s. each.

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C.G.B. 46.

Valuable collection of contemporary prints and illustrations which bring the best-known aspect of the Industrial Revolution to life. Besides pictures of the epoch-making inventions, there are explanations and illustrations of all the subsidiary processes, and the people engaged in them, also of shops, fashions and tailors, and of the Luddite movement.

Part 8. *Roads, Rivers and Canals.*
C.G.B. 48.

Prints, drawings and diagrams illustrating the eighteenth century revolution in communications: the construction of roads, canals, bridges, locks, tunnels; types of vehicle—stage coach, post-chaise, cabs; the postal system, and the G.P.O. A fascinating collection.

Part 9. *Coal, Metal and Steam.*
C.G.B. 47.

More technical than the two last strips—early coal mining and machinery, child labour; iron works and processes; early steam engines and the coming of gas.

100 Years Ago

A Festival series of drawings from contemporary prints. Dawn Trust.

Olde London. I and II. D.T. 34 and 35.

Strip I shows the public buildings and principal streets as they looked 100 years ago. Strip II shows the interior of many of these buildings, and London as seen from the River. Both strips very interesting, especially the second.

Olde Oxford. D.T. 36.

Not so impressive as the last, since few of the buildings illustrated have altered much, and better contemporary drawings are available.

Olde Edinburgh. G.S. 9.

Pleasant but much too short.

The Houses of Parliament

B.I.F. No. 178. Price : 10s.

Beginning with some fine views of the building and its surroundings, the strip deals mainly with the settings in which the daily business of Parliament is conducted. We see the House of

Lords with the royal thrones and Woosack and the historic "bar" from which the Commons hear the Speech from the Throne, the House of Commons, the Libraries, Prime Minister's room and other interesting details not to be seen by the average visitor to Parliament.

The strip shows the dignity and grace of the buildings, especially as seen from the river and the pageantry of the State Opening of Parliament. The strip is divided into three sections dealing with the Building and its surroundings, the Throne, the Lords and the Commons, and finally the Clock Tower and Big Ben. It would be most suitable for older children as an introduction to or revision of Parliamentary institutions.

The next article will deal with
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Artist or Empiric?

By EDWARD CARRICK

Having been brought up as an artist and having lived all my early years among artists whose names are now among the mighty, I often wonder why more artists — real artists — are not employed to make films.

During the last 21 years that I have worked in films, I have heard much about our technical development and even more about the vast sums of money that are being poured into British films so that their quality will rank with the filmic product of other countries.

But all that we really need are IDEAS and ARTISTS to carry them out.

Great ideas cost no more than poor ones. It costs the publishers no more to print Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" than to print some doggerel verse about a contemporary hanging.

Shakespeare's characters were as popular in Queen Elizabeth's time as any characters written into modern drama — and yet the Elizabethan producers paid no more for these "classics" than we do for ordinary plays. Today things seem to have changed a bit. Is it that we are constantly trying to develop our brains at the expense of our imaginations?

As I see it, the knowledge of film technique will help you no further than a would-be-writer is helped by the knowledge of spelling and grammar (a most essential knowledge but to no advantage unless he is motivated by inspiration). Money and chromium dictaphones from America will not help.

It has been a custom for years to joke about artists and their

impracticability. The artists are all right: it is the empirics that are to blame. They masquerade as artists, but their "trial and error" methods are the very antithesis of the true artist's approach. As Leopold Eidlitz pointed out: "We cannot paint a picture and then consider what we shall call this picture; painted as it were by accident, and yet claim for it the title of a work of art. To create a work of fine art, it is necessary that an idea should be represented in matter with premeditation, and that the artist shall, from the beginning of the work, and throughout every stage of it, be the master of the means and methods of accomplishing this object."

It is only by trial and error that the phony artist can possibly succeed — but at whose expense? I once worked on a film with such an "artist" . . . he shot 291,000 feet of film in order to make a 3,000 foot picture!

Now that times have changed and money is not to be squandered and the future is to be borne in mind, I feel that it is time we, in the film world, stopped to put our shop in order. It is time we turned out these glib talkers, these "trial and error" boys and took English films seriously.

Let us have crazy comedies full of wit, social dramas keeping us awake to the realities of life, fantasies transporting us into the unknown, heroics to revive us, but let them be made by the best artists — artists who recognise that they have in charge a trust of enormous value. That upon their studies, their devotion, their enthusiasm, must depend the thoughts and emotions of coming generations.

("International Film Review")

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

OWING to the increased cost of postage on printed papers we are obliged to increase the rate on annual subscriptions to FOCUS: A Film Review, to 7s. 6d. per annum as from May 1st, 1951.

Letters to the Editor

Two Endings

Sir,

Re E.'s review of *Les Amoureux Sont Seuls au Monde* in your May issue, I saw this film shown in Paris with two endings, one after the other. The first was the true ending, where composer remains infatuated and wife commits suicide. It was authentic and very moving. The second, captioned as devised for countries requiring a happy ending, was that of which E. writes. It appeared a false volte face from the rest of the film (of which E.'s review is fair enough). I think it better to deplore a tragic offence against God's law than to be offered something devised for superficial conformity with Christian morality. In any case the real opposition in the two endings was that between French idealisation of love and Anglo-Saxon common sense.

Yours faithfully,

A. McKEE.

Paris.



Hollywood's Homage to the Rosary

Sir,

We were interested to read the account of Father Peyton in the April number of *Focus*, and I have thought that the enclosed report from Blackpool may be of interest in showing the tremendous power of the Rosary films which were produced by Father Peyton.

"During the month of March the people of the diocese of Lancaster had a new experience of the cinema, an experience that has proved the religious film a 'best seller'. Father Peyton's three Rosary films—*The Road to Peace*, *The Joyful Hour* and *The Triumphant Hour*—are not amateurish efforts, but the finest Hollywood productions. Here are seen the Stars—Bing Crosby, Ann Blyth, Don Ameche, Ruth Hussey, Pat O'Brien—not only acting in the moving scenes of the mysteries of the Rosary, but also doing it from conviction to bring to the notice of the

world a practice that they have established in their own homes . . . the Family Rosary.

"In this area of Blackpool and the Fylde we have had ample opportunity of witnessing the effect of these films. St. Cuthbert's Parish has its own projector, and so each evening and most afternoons during the past three weeks a priest has been out with the films showing the whole of this two and a half hour programme in cinemas, parochial halls and schools. There is no sign of the rush abating.

"The story is one of packed audiences all the way. One priest had to switch from his hall at the last moment and use his church, so great was the press of people. Audiences have been spellbound. One child (a non-Catholic) was given a piece of chocolate, but the chocolate was never eaten. It melted away as the enthralled child watched the *Joyful Mysteries* of the Rosary. One whole family—typical of the ordinary families in the town—has been seen at every performance in the district, and they are not finished yet. Non-Catholics love it as much and more than do our own people. One non-Catholic lady who had done a hard day's work stood for two and a half hours and said that she had enjoyed every minute of it.

"Such instances are typical of the reception that these films have received everywhere, and are an indication of the great persuasive power of these beautiful films to bring the Rosary to the home. The general reaction is that for the onlookers the Rosary will never be the same again, for it will have an even greater depth of meaning in the future. No greater tribute could be paid to the efforts of all who contributed to the success of the Rosary Films."

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

FR. O'NIELL,

Secretary.

Bishop's House,
Cannon Hill,
Lancaster.

BOOK REVIEW

Focus Film Course Primer. Handbook No. 1. By Andrew Buchanan. pp. 36. Catholic Film Institute, 1s. 6d.

The monthly articles comprising the first half of "Focus Film Course" have now been published as a handbook. While primarily an introduction to the present series of lectures at Hove House, it also serves as a blue-print for Film Study Groups, providing a scheme of work in place of possibly shapeless arguments. It is a primer in the art of film appreciation through knowledge, a positive approach.

Dr. Buchanan has suggested a syllabus by means of which students can become informed on all aspects of the medium. The film on the screen is the end of the story; he urges them to begin at the beginning. Thus the syllabus for the first eleven meetings covers the film industry as a whole, classification of films, subject matter, films in education, films for children, commercial programmes, the news reel, religious films and film music. The twelfth chapter suggests questions covering the work of the previous meetings, and the student who can answer most of these, says Dr. Buchanan, is ready to go on to the second series of lessons, the *Work of the Film Makers*, now appearing in *Focus*, and later to be published as *Handbook No. 2*.

The writer wastes no words and the short chapters are essentially readable. There are not too many statistics, a specimen lesson with points for discussion is given, and the comments on different parts of the syllabus are interesting. He goes straight to the cause of the trouble when he says that there is a world of difference between books and plays written for adults and those for children, but, judging by the thousands of children who visit cinemas, there is little if any difference between films for adults and films for children. Why? Because the cinema does not cater for a very high standard of intelligence, says Dr. Buchanan. He would have *all* children barred from *all* commercial cinemas, since films made for adults cannot be suitable for

children, and he urges the setting up of a 16mm. network for the showing of children's and religious films.

An original turn of phrase lends a lighter touch to the book. I liked his description of the News Reel as merely an animated interval for some people, and the idea of a film going in one eye and out of the other is, if faintly ludicrous, at least novel.

In conclusion, Dr. Buchanan states that although the first aim of the course is to increase the critical faculties of the film-goer through the formation of study groups, the ultimate purpose is the making of films "which shall proclaim the Christian Message ceaselessly".

This business-like handbook is provided with a bibliography and several blank pages for notes. It is obtainable, price 1s. 6d., from More House, 53 Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7, or from Blue Cottage, Sumner Place Mews, London, S.W.7.

M. A.

Prayer Book for Artists of Stage, Screen and Radio. (Published by Basil Clancy Ltd., 33 Bachelor's Walk, Dublin.)

The Catholic Stage Guild of Ireland is fortunate in having Fr. Cormac O'Daly, O.F.M., to edit a delightful prayer book for actors and players.

The charm of this neat book lies in its original presentation of its prayers. Fr. Cormac knows his actors well. They are busy people with many rehearsals. The prayers are therefore kept short, and the player is continuously but tactfully reminded that life itself is a rehearsal for an eternal drama. There is a prayer by Hubert van Zeller in which the actor is bidden to ask God to save him from the artificiality of the footlights and the sniff of the Green Room.

All the prayers are built on a lovely conception: that Christ is the Supreme Artist who played to perfection the part allotted to Him by His Heavenly Father.

Cover

Personality

Ann Blyth

Against a background of green-garbed ballet girls and Irish-habited singers, a pretty girl walked on to the enormous Empire Theatre stage with perfect poise and sweet reserve. After a few words of introduction she sang "An Irish Lullaby". The huge audience, come from all parts of London to see and hear Ann Blyth with Mario Lanza in *The Great Caruso*, gave her a welcome that only warm-hearted Londoners know how to give and give only to those whom they know they can trust and admire to be natural and human. Then she paid tribute to English musical tradition by singing "O Happy Day" from "Kiss the Bride". This charming song she had learnt specially for the occasion and she sang it with feeling and warmth.

When I chatted with her after the show I was not surprised to have Ann Blyth confirm my impression that she was a trained singer and had been on the stage before she went into films. There is something about the way a person walks on to a stage that betrays the trained actor or actress. After a childhood radio career she was with the San Carlos Opera Company for three years. There is also an unmistakable character about the film star who has been through the theatre mill. Ann Blyth is such a one. She told me that she would not have missed that training for anything. She was very glad, she said, to have the opportunity to go back to the stage last summer for a short spell in order, as she put it, "to learn again the things I had forgotten".

Her singing, too, gave evidence of the careful artist. She treated both the songs she sang with the care that compliments both the singer and the song. So many singers nowadays imagine that they have only to "vocalise". John McCormack taught us the lesson that anything worth singing is worth taking trouble over and Ann Blyth gives us that impression too: she had taken trouble to present her numbers to the Empire audience as well as she knew how and the audience did not take long to appreciate and react to the compliment she thus paid them.

One becomes accustomed to the professional approach of many of the film stars. It was not difficult to recognise the sincerity which is Ann Blyth's most heart-warming quality. The tough-skinned press representatives with whom I talked after the Empire show were loud in their praises of her genuine and unselfconscious manner. She had come to keep her date, regardless of the fact that she was stiff with the reactions of a vaccination demanded by the American authorities and which had left her feeling very stiff and sore. To me she confided that it was all worth while as a preliminary to her visit to Rome. She was wildly excited about the thought of seeing the Holy Father. To a Catholic priest, of course, there is something specially delightful in the loyal, pious devotion which such a personality brings to her religious life and there was an unusual warmth in the way she responded to my "God bless you": "Oh, thank you, Father!"

Her film career began, as far as England is concerned, with *The Merry Monahans*. *Mr. Peabody and the Angel*, *Another Part of the Forest* and *Top O' the Morning* are the other films of hers which have been shown over here. Now she is appearing in *The Great Caruso* in which she makes a hit by reason of her under-playing to Mario Lanza's rather obvious and over-played Caruso. Incidentally, she is not allowed in that film to do justice to her talent as a singer when she ends the film with a song version of "Over The Waves". She has just finished work at Denham on *The House on the Square*, for which she was flown from Hollywood at short notice to take over Constance Smith's part. She is a good trouser and a fine, human character.

JOHN VINCENT.

FOCUS FILM COURSE

Handbook No. 1

Foreword by

Rev. John A. V. Burke

Film Course by

Andrew Buchanan, D.Litt., Ph.D.

"provokes thought and arouses a desire to read more . . . an excellent primer for Film Study Groups."

—The Catholic Times.

" . . . invaluable to anyone who wants to take an intelligent interest in the cinema."

—The Catholic Worker.

Contents include essential facts and statistics relating to: The Way Films Vary: The Cinema Programme: The News Reel: Fictional versus Factual Films: Educational and Children's Films: The Religious Film: Film Music.

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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



PRICE

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THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
6. *To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.*

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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

Vol. IV

JULY 1951

No. 7

WORDS OF WISDOM

"I have very little idea of what is going on in the world: but occasionally I happen to see some of the things they are drawing and writing there and it gives me the conviction that they are all living in ash-cans. It makes me glad I cannot hear what they are singing.

"If a writer is so cautious that he never writes anything that cannot be criticised, he will never write anything that can be read. If you want to help other people you have got to make up your mind to write things that some men will condemn.

"The poet enters into himself in order to create. The contemplative enters into God in order to be created.

"A Catholic poet should be an apostle by being first of all a poet, not try to be a poet by being first of all an Apostle. For if he presents himself to people as a poet, he is going to be judged as a poet, and if he is not a good one his apostolate will be ridiculed.

"If you write for God you will reach many men and bring them joy.

"If you write for men—you may make some money and you may give a little joy and you may make a noise in the world, for a little while.

"If you write for yourself you can read what you yourself have written and after ten minutes you will be so disgusted you will wish you were dead."

I have quoted these words from Thomas Merton's book "Seeds of Contemplation" because there is a close affinity between the poet and the film-artist. What a poet does with words a film-artist does with pictures.

Thomas Merton was an American newspaper man, literary critic (I think, film-critic also), essayist, poet, who in recent times became a Trappist monk. His words of wisdom are worthy of attention.

EDITOR.

Film Critics on Lake Lucerne

The O.C.I.C. General Council and Study Conference

Leaving London Airport at midday on May 24th, I arrived at Lucerne at 4-30 p.m., was met at the station by an efficient Swiss Scout who took me to the Union Hotel, where I was swept by Dr. Reinert, the doyen of our Vice-Presidents and our host for this occasion, into the embrace of an Executive Committee, already several hours old. We emerged to take breath and refreshment several hours later.

Friday, May 25th, was devoted to the General Council of the O.C.I.C. It began at 9 a.m. by an assembly of the representatives of 28 nations and continued until 12-15, past midnight! We had breaks for lunch and also to see a Spanish film, *Balarrasa*, about which I hope to say something elsewhere, but even these intervals were severely filled up with "contacts". That is to say, between mouthfuls or eye-fuls, as the case may be, one found oneself discussing the pros and cons of religious films, of film criticism, or it might be, the exchange of information between the various countries, with Frenchmen, or Spaniards, or gentlemen from Germany or Austria, or maybe from Cuba or Haiti, or Egypt or Lebanon. This kind of Pentecostal intercourse makes great demands on the nervous system and the resulting exhaustion diminishes the benefit otherwise being derived from the enormous and excellently prepared Swiss meals!

The principal business of this General Council was a Study Conference, organised by the General Secretariat of O.C.I.C. This occupied the best part of two days, Saturday and Sunday, and took place, appropriately enough, in the Parliament House of the Canton of Lucerne. Occupying elaborate seats usually filled by the legislators of this enchanting country, film critics from many lands listened to a masterly analysis of the function of the film critic, delivered by J. L. Tallenay,

Editor of the French *Radio-Cinema*. They had their chance to speak in Parliament when, following a series of "interventions", the debate was opened to all comers.

Tallenay outlined the present position of film criticism in the form of a report on tendencies and methods and put forward some suggestions, open to discussion, by which the Christian film critic might extend both the range of his own validity as a critic and the field of his influence.

It is necessary, he said, that the critic should undertake to *inform* his readers, since publicity is so often misleading, and to *form* them also, since most spectators, even though educated persons, lack the necessary knowledge to be able to judge a film technically and artistically. The Christian critic must provide his readers with enough material to enable them to form their own opinion as to whether the film is to be seen or not.

Some critics fall into the error of snobbery, that is to say, of judging the film merely according to its aesthetic value, forgetting that film is a language and should have a message understandable by the public. For this reason the critic should give his reasons for liking or disliking a film, thus enabling the reader to form his judgment.

On the other hand there are those who content themselves with cataloguing questionable situations in films without sufficiently considering the value of the film as a whole. The danger here is that films may be commended whose only value is that they contain no unseemly situation. The fact that the majority of films tend to be stupid and vulgar and thus present a danger as regrettable as immorality is often overlooked.

The critic must be as well educated as the readers for whom he writes. He is offering to guide them in their

choice of film and therefore he owes them something more than a cursory outline of the film as such together with a smart remark at the expense of the producers and players. Even though he may not have the space in which to publish all he knows about the film, the critic should have taken the trouble to analyse it. He will take care to distinguish between this analysis of the film and the judgment which he himself will pass upon it. The Christian critic will judge a film completely, that is to say, he will balance it from the artistic and the moral viewpoint.

With regard to religious films, M. Tallenay said that the critic who is a Catholic should be severe without being destructive. Avoiding excessive indulgence, he must deliver a verdict within the limits fixed by the authors of the films and taking into consideration their possibilities, their material and artistic limitations.

The Christian film critic will remember that he is writing for a wide public that contains both Christian and non-Christian elements. He will bear in mind those others who, through his judgments, may come to know something of the mind of the Church on the various problems presented by the cinema.

Among the interventions which followed J. L. Tallenay's exposition of the theme of the Conference was one by W. J. Igoe, the dramatic and film critic so well known to Catholic readers in this country and America. Mr. Igoe made the point that the critic must above all things be true, both to himself and to the film he is criticising. Much harm is done by films which do not tell the truth and which, therefore, mislead people about America or Britain or with whatever country or people the film may be concerned. The persons most to blame for the misinformation about these countries are the natives of those countries themselves who allow bad fiction to pass for fact. The critic, however, has his share of blame for he should be able to inform his public of the truth which the film has not told.

The debate which ensued was a lively one but there is not room here to deal with the points raised; in general critics were concerned with their freedom to be able to express their

true opinions about films. This, of course, is not always easy for the writers in commercial papers where the policy of advertising or even political reasons may hamstring the critic. It was suggested that some kind of national or perhaps international federation of film critics might be able to obtain and safeguard the literary and religious freedom of the critic in this matter.

A great consolation to the assembled critics in their deliberations was the telegram received from the Vatican which came in answer to a message of filial homage and devotion imploring the Papal Blessing, sent to the Holy Father by Dr. Bernard, President of O.C.I.C. on behalf of those participating in the Study Conference. The telegram read: "His Holiness very impressed by filial homage of O.C.I.C. General Council and critics assembled for Study Conference at Lucerne. Paternally encourages positive work in the very important domain of cinematographic criticism. Sends all participants the desired Apostolic Blessing. Montini. Subst."

Thus yet another Papal incentive to continuation in this important but wearying work of Catholic Action came to crown the endeavours of the General Council of O.C.I.C. 1951.

The excursion up the Lake of Lucerne which occupied the last day of the meeting was not, as it might sound, primarily "a day off". Granted we had excellent hospitality from the kindly Swiss municipality at Altford, as we had had also on the Sunday from the municipality at Lucerne itself. But the eternal and everpresent urge of the Continental "to make contacts" meant that while one was trying to admire the beautiful mountain scenery an Italian gentleman would demand information about the position of children's films in England; then, while trying to snatch a glimpse of the obelisk which commemorates Schiller, a Frenchman would demand to know what the English thought of *Dieu a besoin des hommes*; and so on, and so on. The outcome of it all is that anyone who blithely steps into the doorway marked "Catholic Film Action" abandons for ever in this world the hope of a quiet half hour. May God bless them all!

J. A. V. BURKE.

AMERICAN MEMORIES

No. 6—DAN O'HERLIHY

(This Month's Cover Personality)

By DECLAN FLYNN, O.F.M.

To meet a man for a few hours and then to write about him will seem like arrogance, unless you remember that I am just giving a personal impression.

Dan O'Herlihy impressed me as a man of considerable charm and intelligence. He is over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, athletic and extremely handsome; he speaks beautifully, dresses quietly, is very friendly without being "hearty"; he will answer your questions courteously and then will ask you questions about yourself, your work, the friends he knows, the people and the places he knows and you know.

I met him last October in a broadcasting studio in Hollywood, when he was playing John Cyril Hawes in the "Hour of St. Francis" programme, which I have already written about in the January issue of *Focus*.

One moment I was chatting and smoking with him; the next moment I was watching him playing John Cyril Hawes. I was amazed and fascinated by the rapidity with which he could jump into someone else's skin. For a moment or so (I was so near to him that I could see his every movement) he seemed a little nervous, then Dan O'Herlihy disappeared and John Cyril Hawes, mount-guard, waiter on railways, sailor, architect, Anglican missionary in Zanzibar, convert to Catholicism, Catholic priest who built churches in Australia, consecrated bishop, philosopher, poet, archeologist, "Hermit of the Bahamas", who eventually changed his pontifical robes for the Franciscan habit and his name from John Cyril to Frater Hieronymus, was re-created and lived and moved and the amazing story of his life was presented to us.

This power to lose oneself is, surely,

the distinguishing mark of the great actor. Alec Guinness possesses the power; so do many of the actors and actresses who have been schooled in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Dan O'Herlihy achieved fame with the Abbey Players and at the Gate Theatre, Dublin. He was born on May 1st, 1919, at Wexford, Ireland, and went to Dublin when he was two years old. His father was a government official. Dan grew up and waxed strong and was educated at Blackrock College, which is under the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers; from there he graduated to the National University of Ireland. It was while taking part in a University play that he was "discovered" by Producer Frank Dermody who offered him the leading rôle in "Three To Go". This play launched young O'Herlihy professionally. Later, he went to the Gate Theatre where he appeared in more than 60 plays, acting the lead in half of them. It is interesting to note that it was at the Gate Theatre that his taste for Shakespearian drama was born. He appeared in at least a dozen successes. He also participated in more than 300 broadcasts over Dublin and B.B.C. airwave.

"Hell Bent for Heaven", in which he was the juvenile; "Sun-up", in which he played the lead; "You Can't Take It With You", in which he portrayed the mad Russian; and the lead in Shaw's "Joan of Arc" are among the plays in which O'Herlihy played at the Gate Theatre.

To date he has done little film-work. You may remember that he played one of the hold-up men in *Odd Man Out* and also a part in *Hungry Hill*, with Margaret Lockwood. However, his film-future seems assured. At the moment of writing he is starring as Macduff in Orson Welles' *Macbeth*. He is spotlighted opposite Welles (who

plays Macbeth) and participates with him in the famous duel scene set off by the challenge: "Lay on Macduff".

O'Herlihy has baffled the Hollywood boys who try to "type" newcomers. He is not the type to allow himself to be typed. He received several flattering offers from American film companies, but instead of accepting a film studio contract, he chose to go to Hollywood as a free agent. He was followed a few months later by his wife and their year-old daughter, Olwen. Not being typed is regarded an asset in film circles whereas being tabbed "another any one" predicts quick oblivion.

While I was in the studio I got the impression that Dan O'Herlihy is well liked and respected by everybody. I was told that it is very likely that he will be invited to play the part of Our Lord in John Farrow's film. I hope he does. He is a first-rate Catholic and one feels that he would play the part with understanding and integrity.

Like many other first class actors, O'Herlihy has other cultural interests. I understand that he holds a degree of Bachelor of Architecture from the National University of Dublin and is also an Associate of the Royal (English) Institute of Architects, and that he expects to establish an architectural office in Dublin within the next few years, in company with a former school-mate.

At present he is doing a lot of radio work in Hollywood. After he had finished this Peter Cyril Hawes programme he had to rush off to do another broadcast in another studio somewhere in Hollywood. But, before he left, he autographed for me a script with a charming message written in Gaelic which I am told means: "God bless you, Father O'Flynn". It would be fitting for me to conclude this inadequate study by saying: "May God bless Dan O'Herlihy, and his wife, his child and his work."

Tribute to Very Rev. Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P.

The Catholic Film Institute has suffered a severe loss in the resignation of its Chairman, Very Rev. Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P. The Chairman of a flourishing organisation requires intelligence, sympathy, tact, tolerance and good humour. Fr. Hilary possesses these qualities in a high degree.

Fr. Hilary has always preached the doctrine that man should develop all his faculties of body mind and soul. He himself practices what he preaches. Although a scholar, a sound philosopher and theologian, he can create things. He sketches very well indeed; you may see a set of altar rails in the Church of the Capuchin Fathers, Oxford, which he made; he has made some amateur documentary films recording the work of the A.R.P. in Oxford and the missionary work of the Dominican Fathers in South Africa. Needless to say he was a firm believer in the Apostolate of the Cinema

He always realised the necessity of film-appreciation and film-criticism; nevertheless he equally realised the necessity of making films of a Christian character. Under his leadership the C.F.I. entered production.

The disputation, "The Cinema is the highest form of Art", which he devised and which was broadcast on the Third Programme, made history at the B.B.C. In many other ways he emphasised the work of the Catholic Film Institute.

We all deeply regret that ill-health has forced Fr. Hilary to leave us. The C.F.I. offers him its gratitude and assures him that his work and character will ever be remembered.

Colour: Boon or Bane?

By J. J. CURLE

The introduction of colour into a film usually provokes one of two very definite reactions; either the watcher delights in the mere fact of colour with its sensuous appeal and associations, or the artificiality and harshness of the colour used repels him. But the real issue for those who believe in the film as an art form lies far deeper than this.

Technical processes will no doubt improve with time, though commercial interests may keep the improved methods at bay for a few years. Yet, even if they do improve, the advance will be towards naturalism rather than art. The film image will become as nearly lifelike as it is possible for anything to be which is distorted in scale, limited by the bounds of a screen and gazed at steadily by an eye that does not move.

These limitations are, however, in themselves substantial.

To alter scale, as anyone knows who has looked through a magnifying glass, is to alter both the relative and the absolute values of the colours and shapes seen. Look at life through the wrong end of the telescope and it becomes sharp, neat, tidy, quite unlike the sprawling dusty affair we know. Look at it through the right end and you are perpetually living in the heightened atmosphere of close-up without being able to take the unemotional long view which puts a scene in perspective. So too with the bounded screen and the static eye, the image is distorted from its resemblance to life. The eye in contact with nature knows no limits and therefore does not have to compose what it sees. It roves about taking in cursory, simplified "impressions" such as Monet and Pissarro captured in their paintings and, before it is sated—or if it is jarred—it moves on. But looking at the screen we see the whole of what appears on it simultaneously and even a change of camera angle does not give us the same effect as moving our eye, for either it

is made too seldom (the eye being accustomed to pass from angle to angle with lightning speed) or else, if it is made continuous as in a panning shot, the contrast between the moving scene and the static border of the screen makes us physically uneasy as if looking out of a moving car through field glasses.

But, granted that these limitations were *not* vitally important, would the successful imitation of natural colour satisfy us in the cinema? Frankly I doubt it. If we want to look at nature we go into a park or a garden or take a trip to the country, but we go into the cinema as men have gone into every playhouse from the earliest times, to purge our emotions by living through others fuller, finer, more shapely—or at least more exciting—than our own. We want a *human* story in which man stands out as the dominating feature of his environment, or at least a story in which that environment seems to reflect human moods. In the black-and-white film this was possible because its light and shade correspond in some way to the light and shade of man's nature. The skilful cameraman builds his pattern of mood in *light* just as the composer of the accompanying music builds it in sound. To strengthen the power of these moods as artistic unities he may also compose his individual pictures in terms of mass like a painter creating a satisfying unity on canvas. In addition he can alter the emotional effect of his shots by altering their range, pace and definition.

But with colour the cameraman's resources are far more limited. Man photographed in colour against a natural background at once shrinks to less than lifesize, to the position of a mere "extra" in the picture. If he does manage to stand out it is only because of the colour of his shirt, not because of the power of his emotions or personality. Nature in colour can

no longer be kept as a backdrop to set a mood, for the mind does not react to colours with the same unanimity of interpretation as it does to light and shade. The red that to one is joy, to another war, and, to yet another, shame, cannot be used as common coin with a universally known value. Similarly to compose with "masses" in their natural colouring is clearly almost impossible, when the slightest movement of the camera or an actor may cause even a small spot of colour, by fresh juxtaposition, to strengthen or weaken a large mass to the point at which its apparent weight is altered. Speeding up of shots and deliberate blurring of definition are also made largely ineffective by natural colour, for the eye is too distracted by irrelevant *background* colour to catch the emotional linking thread with the first device, while in the second case though the *shapes* of the objects seen are fused into a lulling and sensuous rhythm their colours may still clash or disturb just as much as when sharply defined and will annoy doubly because they suggest objects which they do not clearly define. Finally the effect of the close-up as a heightener of emotion is largely annulled when, not only does the background distract in this manner, but the spectator's interest is diffused over a number of different coloured planes of flesh and clothing instead of being focused on the centre of one mass—the head.

Of course the alternative to using natural colour is to create endless "sets" on a theatrical pattern and use colour as an element of fantasy rather than realism. This is the technique of the Disney cartoon, *The Red Shoes* and many of the best musicals, and it is in this direction that the future of colour would seem to lie. At the other end of the scale, also, where mere pictorial fact is required, as in news-reels and nature films, colour can add notably to the effect produced. But the "realism" of colour in the feature film is a myth and we would do well to recognise it before the art that black-and-white film has created is abandoned. It is easy to mistake greater factual accuracy for greater realism, but cutting the dancing out of a realist ballet and performing it against a three dimensional slum background does not make it more

real; it merely destroys it as a work of art.

Perhaps a new art will be evolved from the use of colour. Possibly, as at the introduction of sound, an old one will be lost. Perhaps colour will even take us back to the world of the silent film with its emphasis on fantasy, action and larger-than-life acting. One thing is certain and that is that, with an increasing range of accurate colour tone registered on the film, the art director's efforts to highlight his characters' emotions against the rainbow riot of natural backgrounds will soon, manifestly, be a lost cause. If the colour film is to progress as an art form it must either scrap nature or scrap its efforts to show the subtler feelings and thoughts of man as parts of an artistic pattern.

Catholic Theatre Guild

A meeting was held at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, London, W.C., and afterwards at the Charing Cross Hotel, on Sunday, June 10th, to inaugurate the resurrected Catholic Theatre Guild. Over a hundred member of the stage, screen, radio, variety and other allied professions were present. At the suggestion of Father O'Hare, Chaplain to the Guild, the Temporary Committee, with Mr. Ted Kavanagh as Chairman, was re-elected en bloc until such time as a larger and more representative gathering has had time to consider the revised Constitution which the Temporary Committee has been working on.

Mr. Michael Brennan, Mr. John O'Sullivan, Mr. George Baker and Miss Mary Pilgrim were co-opted on to the Temporary Committee to represent the interests of film players, technicians, music and the student actors of the R.A.D.A. and other similar academies.

The next meeting will be at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, London, W.C., on Sunday, July 1st, at 5 p.m. In the meantime all Catholic members of the allied professions are urged to become members of the Catholic Theatre Guild. All information from The Secretary, The Catholic Theatre Guild, Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane, London, W.C.

THE CAMERAMAN

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Cameramen are fairly numerous, but those combining creative ability with technical knowledge are comparatively rare. Think of all the friends who show you their snaps after holidays. "That's where we stayed. You can't see it very well, but . . ." "Here's May with the baby—the light wasn't too good that day." Occasionally you are shown snaps revealing picture sense, fine detail, and dramatic qualities, but usually you have to sit transfixed, staring at distant, dim, drab views of vital interest only to the photographer and his family.

So it is with film cameramen. Many will bring back the right material shot in the wrong way. A few will capture first-class imaginative material. In film production, save newsreel work, a cameraman receives instructions from the director who knows, or should know, the exact position from which a scene must be taken. That is why a director without full knowledge of the camera's capabilities and limitations works at a serious disadvantage. The cameraman will carry out the director's wishes regarding angle, nature of lighting, and general set-up unless, of course, such instructions are technically impossible to obtain. Maybe cameraman and director will work together to select the best positions, but it remains the cameraman's responsibility to secure first class photographic results.

In modern studio production the cameraman is more accurately described as the lighting expert, for he is primarily concerned with lighting a scene and the characters appearing in it, leaving the manipulation of the camera to an operator. Lighting is among the most difficult of all jobs in film-making. First, a scene has to be lit so that it shall appear as in normal daylight, or sunlight, or lamp light. Then the characters must be equally normally lit. The audience must not be conscious of any

concentration of light upon this or that person, even though such concentration probably exists. Moreover, a character must never walk out of the light. Wherever he moves, the illumination must be even, as in an ordinary day-lit room. Consequently, whilst batteries of lamps provide an overall light, the rays of others follow people wherever they go in a scene. Even that is not all. A character may walk out of one scene into another, but the latter may not be filmed for weeks after the former. In the finished film the character's move from one scene to the next will be immediate, and so the lighting expert must be sure that even though the scene has changed, the lighting of that character is the same. Stars can be filmed only after exhaustive camera tests have been made, and lighting formulae for each evolved.

The cameraman is an artist modelling in light and shade, just as, in his different medium, the sculptor models in clay. Sometimes artificial lighting is introduced into natural exterior scenes to strengthen the daylight, or so that light can be controlled and directed on certain characters. This is particularly difficult work, for no evidence of artificial light must be apparent.

A top-ranking lighting expert has almost certainly worked his way up from, perhaps, being a clapper-boy, focus-puller, or general assistant, and became an operator before rising one step higher. Now the work of the operator is of supreme importance, for he is the man responsible for the actual movement of the camera—keeping characters in the centre of the screen regardless of whether they are dawdling or rushing about; he has to follow them smoothly, track up to them, or withdraw imperceptibly, making sure both they and the background remain sharply in focus. This

demands long experience, patience and a lot of rehearsing before a scene can be filmed.

In the documentary field, most cameramen use light portable, clock-driven cameras which can be carried anywhere, free of the restrictions imposed by complicated and cumbersome studio equipment. Here, too, photographic values are of first

importance, and anyone who has taken the trouble to study camerawork for itself—that is, separating it from the narrative being unfolded—can instantly tell the work of the creative cameraman from that of the purely technical man.

However, whatever the nature of a film, the finest camerawork never distracts the viewer from the story being projected.

C.F.I. NOTES

Catholic Film Exhibition

The dates originally thought of for the Film Exhibition and Conference which the Birmingham Youth Organisation has promised to organise for the C.F.I. coincide with the dates of the Lay Apostolate to be held in Rome, October 7th to 14th. It is therefore necessary to change the dates for our Film Conference.

As we mentioned before, the idea is that priests particularly but layfolk as well, who are practically interested in sub-standard film production should come to Stratford with their films to show them and to talk about them, as well as to see what other people have done in this line and to exchange ideas which will certainly be fruitful of much good for practical Catholic film action in the future.

Details can be obtained from Rev. Father T. C. Copsey, M.A., Soli House, John Street, Stratford-on-Avon.

C.F.I. Lectures

Talks have been given on various aspects of the film from the Catholic standpoint at Chester, at Cardiff, at Sheffield and at Weybridge. Discussions at these meetings show that there is a great deal of adult and intelligent interest waiting to be awakened and guided along the lines indicated by Pius XI in his memorable Encyclical on Films.

Focus Film Course

The remaining lectures in this Course will be given by Miss Freda Bruce

Lockhart, speaking on "Dialogue in Films"; by Mr. Ian Dalrymple, speaking on "Factual versus Fictional Films"; and a final talk summarising the Course by Andrew Buchanan.

The next series will be given during the Autumn. The first series can be delivered again if there is sufficient demand for them. There is no reason why they should not be arranged for other parts of the country with the same or with different speakers.

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FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;

C, family audiences; D, particularly for children



Macbeth (Orson Welles)



Alan Napier (The Holy Father)

MACBETH

Starring: Orson Welles, with Jeanette Nolan, Dan O'Herlihy, Roddy McDowall and Alan Napier. **Producer and Director:** Orson Welles. **Distributors:** Republic Pictures. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes approx.

It is a pity that with this issue of Focus we have to cut down our space. *Macbeth* demands a full treatment, if only to deal with the weaknesses of what could so easily have been an outstanding version of the tragedy.

Shakespeare presents the camera with many a tempting trick; the wood of Birnam coming to Dunsinane, Banquo's Ghost, the Weird Sisters, the Sleep-walking scene, and so on. But Welles throws away most of the tricks the bard allows him in place of a mixture of obvious stage-limited movement and some moments of almost inspired photography. The use of deep focus with the head of Macbeth nearly filling the screen while the characters he speaks to or about move in the distance was very effective. The fatuous changes of headgear which Macbeth assumes, on the other hand were merely silly. First a helmet which looked like a rehearsal

for Welles as the Khubla Khan in *Black Rose*, then a crown which looked like the Statue of Liberty brought up to date, then a square and most uncomfortable headpiece which might have found a place adorning some of the statues in Battersea Park. This fussiness and concern with oddness for its own sake makes one wonder whether the maker of *Citizen Kane*, the man who scared American radio audiences with his Martian invasion, has really matured.

Then, too, the intrusion of a "Holy Man", a kind of Wagnerian priest, in order to underline his conception of *Macbeth* as a conflict between the powers of good and evil would be impertinence if it were not merely naïve. Since its showing at Venice three years ago, the sound track has been much modified. The grotesque Scottish accents, though still outrageous, are less offensive to the ear. The ending has been changed and a prologue added, in which Welles points out that the story of *Macbeth* is a fight between good and evil.

Orson Welles' performance as *Macbeth* is a mixture of the worst kind of strutting player with the subtlest kind of insight into the character of the man. It is, in other words, an infuriating film which you ought to see, if only to be able to say how much you disagree with its producer's interpretation. V.

A TALE OF FIVE CITIES

Starring: Bonar Colleano, with Lana Morris, Barbara Kelly, Anne Vernon, Eva Bartok, Gina Lollobrigida, Karin Humboldt.
Producer: Alexander Paal.
Director: Montgomery Tully. A Grand National Picture. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 99 minutes.

Bob Mitchell, a trapeze artist, was rash enough to put on a private performance which resulted in a fall, concussion and complete loss of memory and identity. The only clues were a cigarette case with his name, five bank notes, each with a girl's name written on it, and the photo of a small boy. The notes are in the currency of Italy, Austria, Germany, France and Great Britain respectively.

The following up of these clues might have provided scope for a really good picture. But what has emerged from the machine of the film industry is something colourless and flabby. Some names in the credits recall British National Films and it would seem that the mantle of that now defunct company has fallen on Grand National Pictures, which would appear to have taken to heart a remark made by a character in this film: "Corny or not, that's the way it's going to be."

Rome is the first city visited by Bob in search of his past. The aerial view of St. Peter's is included in the film. This has the advantage of providing, in return for a modest outlay, a piece of local colour recognisable even by conducted tourists. He appears to have driven from the airport to the terminal along the *old* Appian Way, which must have been more interesting, if more bumpy, than the way most of us are taken on such occasions. But the real highspot in the Eternal City is Gina Lollobrigida in a sweater. (Some of those who saw her for the first time in *Pagliacci* were quite sure we should soon be seeing her in a sweater, and how right they were.) He also sees an ancient ruin or two, of course.

More modern ruins abound in Vienna and Berlin. But still no wife and child for Bob. He finds out in turn that none of the ladies had been either his wife or in any other way qualified to be the mother of his child. Having discovered this he makes a pass at each one in rotation. Gently but firmly and unanimously they turn him down. (Cheer up, chaps, if the girls turn you down. It can even happen to Bonar Colleano.)

When Bob had toiled up the steps to the Sacré-Coeur on Montmartre, I almost expected a very bogus priest to come out of the basilica and remark: "It will soon be Ave Maria, my son." But no. Let us be thankful for small mercies.

Well, in the end it turns out that he is quite eligible for a letter of freedom and that as for the small boy—Bob's his uncle. So the scene is set for the final curtain with the girl who has loved him ever since he lost his memory.

The synopsis contains an unusual piece of information: "British Quota." This is an explanation, if not an excuse. Q.

LAUGHTER IN PARADISE

Starring: Alastair Sim, Fay Compton, Beatrice Campbell. **Producer and Director:** Mario Zampi. **Distributors:** Associated British Pathé. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

It was not exclusively a press show and your gentle, non-professional critic noticed that the public laughed much more than did his professional brethren; this makes one think that the public is happily content with being entertained, while the sated and jaded critic complicates things by looking for art. The art of entertainment is competently exercised and well displayed in *Laughter in Paradise*.

A practical joker, whose feats are reminiscent of the great Horace de Vere Côle himself, dies on a joke and leaves a queer will. Four of his relatives are each to come into £50,000 on certain preposterous conditions. An appalling, nagging sister (Fay Compton) is to seek and keep for a month a situation as a domestic servant. Cousin Deniston, later of the Army Pay Corps and now secret writer of "thrillers" (Alastair Sim), is to spend 28 days in gaol. Timid Cousin Herbert has to "hold up" the manager of the bank where he works. Philandering Cousin Simon has to marry the first girl he speaks to after the will has been read.

This in effect gives us four separate plots and results in a certain episodic character as far as the film is concerned. Anyway, all have their individual difficulties in qualifying for their legacy and this gives us four different opportunities for fun. And they are well taken.

It is always a joy to have Alastair Sim, with his smooth speech and deft touches. The timid bank clerk and the roystering philanderer (George Cole and Guy Middleton) have to portray not unfamiliar types and squeeze out new humour from situations which in the main are not novel. And they do it successfully too.

The one attempt at delineation of character is in the hands of Fay Compton, who gives a beautiful rendering of the nagging middle class

woman learning her lesson that considerateness is quite a thing. We do actually watch her learning it and while I don't know about *Laughter in Paradise*, we have the best authority for being sure that there is joy in heaven over a sinner doing penance. Amidst all the laughter that is just what Miss Compton brought out by her lovely performance.

Joyce Grenfell is in it too, the same old sixth former with her slightly off-right slang, this time an A.T.S. officer engaged for ten years to the thriller writer. She always makes me helpless with laughter, but I wonder if it is fair to her to expect always variations of the same type.

The list of players is long and reassuring. What of a production which, besides the principals and those already mentioned, includes such favourites as Ernest Thesiger, A. E. Matthews, John Laurie and Anthony Steel? It should be good and it will be popular.

X.

MYSTERY STREET

Starring: Sally Forrest, Richard Montalban and Elsa Lanchester. **Director:** John Surtees. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

A story about a man who is wrongfully accused of murder and of the painstaking work of the Harvard Legal Research College which leads both to his arrest and his acquittal. The film is neatly made and keeps the interest of the spectator till the final chase and capture of the murderer. There are some improbabilities, of course. I was a little unconvinced that a body would be reduced to a state of dry-boned skeletonisation by a few months immersion in the sea. But then, the Harvard expert would not have been able to deduce that the bones were those of a ballet dancer and that would have spoiled quite a lot of the fun.

Elsa Lanchester turns in an excellent study of an unscrupulous landlady and Richard Montalban makes quite a pleasing detective with a Latin American accent.

V.

THE GROOM WORE SPURS

Starring: Ginger Rogers, Jack Carson, Joan Davis, James Brown. **Producer:** Howard Welsh. **Director:** Richard Wharf. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 81 minutes.

There is hope for all of us if we can laugh at ourselves with our own idiosyncrasies and pretensions. In this film Hollywood takes time off to laugh at itself good-humouredly and, let us hope, with a firm purpose of amendment.

Fancy

On the screen, Ben Castle, admirably played by Jack Carson, is an idol whom the ladies of all shapes and sizes adore. He is a great big hunk of a guy who loves horses in a big and tender way; he has a crooning mellifluous voice which causes his fans to faint, for what reason I cannot say; he is the massive, manly sort of chap with a way with him and a manner that his kicks or kisses are all the same to certain idolatrous females.

Fact

Off screen, this idol is revealed as an idle sort of fellow with little character, and capability who hates horses and can't sing; he is just a stooge, mere clay in the hands of the publicity potters. His vocal powers are contrived by off-stage records; his horsemanship is the work of a double. His manly, muscular charm derives, I should say, from distance which, it is said, lends enchantment.

Apart from this open confession of Hollywood's soul, there is little else to the film. Ginger Rogers, Ben Castle's lawyer, plays her part as she no doubt was told to play it, which means that within the first five seconds all the laws of gravity are broken and she falls into his arms; and that in the next five seconds (almost) she is his wife, disillusioned ere her vows spoken before some quack in a mountain shack have had time to get fixed in her silly little head and too-too hero-worshipping heart. Joan Davis, who plays the part of Ginger

Rogers' room-mate, adds ginger to this film, which is light, merry and digestible.

E.

BONAVENTURE

Starring: Claudette Colbert, Ann Blyth, Anne Crawford. **Producer:** Michael Kraike. **Director:** Douglas Sirk. A Universal-International Picture, G.F.D. Release. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 84 minutes.

I have not seen the play (of the same name) from which this film is taken and do not, therefore, know what changes have been made in the transition process; but I am left wondering why the scene is laid in a convent. As far as the plot is concerned an ordinary hospital would have done just as well, and we should have been spared the inept efforts of actresses to impersonate nuns. The less said about Gladys Cooper's performance as Rev. Mother the better, and I do not take kindly to Claudette Colbert as Sister Mary Bonaventure, the heroine of the story. On the other hand, Connie Gilchrist's Sister Josephine is wholly delightful, without one false note—quite the best thing in the film, which is for the rest a thriller with little merit. There are, however, some excellent shots of flooded landscapes and good performances by Ann Blyth, who as a girl falsely condemned to death for murder is not afraid of having a good fit of hysterics and really letting herself go, and Michael Pate as the half-witted youth who is so devoted to Sister Bonaventure.

In spite of having to run a hospital crowded to extreme limits by patients and refugees rendered homeless by floods, the nuns are able to sing elaborate four-part polyphonic motets in their chapel, though there are apparently only five of them: one can but suppose that the fifth (Rev. Mother by the way) reinforced the first soprano part!

There is nothing positively offensive to Catholic taste, but producers and actresses might take a little trouble to find out how nuns really behave.

T. C. F.

SIROCCO

Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Marta Toren, Lee J. Cobb, with Everett Sloane, Gerald Mohr, Zero Mostel. **Producer:** Robert Lord. **Director:** Curtis Bernhardt. **Distributors:** Columbia. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

The scene is in Damascus in 1925 when the Syrians were fighting the French. Harry Smith (Humphrey Bogart) is strictly nootral—he says so—and though he runs guns for the Syrians, he ends up with one of their bullets in his back.

Lee J. Cobb, as one would expect, gives a finished performance as a French officer. Zero Mostel is too modest with his first name; I should give him more marks than that.

The film presents two problems. One is enunciated by the lady who says to Mr. Bogart: "How can a man so ugly be so handsome?" This I will not attempt to solve.

The other is: why is the picture called *Sirocco* when no wind of any kind plays any part in it? For a time I was baffled and then I remembered that the *sirocco* (in Italian *scirocco*) is notorious for making you feel sleepy and irritable.

Q.

APACHE DRUMS

Starring: Stephen McNally, Coleen Gray, Willard Parker. **Producer:** Val Lewton. **Director:** Hngo Fregonese. A Universal-International Picture. G.F.D. Release. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 72 minutes.

Apache Drums is a hair-raising, blood curdling Red Indian picture, all according to adventure books for schoolboys. The topography, history and the ferocious character of the Red Indians are all in accordance with what is *supposed* to be true in stories of this kind. The reality may have been very different, but who of us is to know?

The story is somewhat easy to predict from the first—the bad, loose-living, handsome ne'er-do-well (Stephen McNally) makes good—all for the love of a lady (Coleen Gray). It is done

by his bravery in defending a small township of settlers against the invading hordes of Red Indians, who, for the purposes of this picture, are all bad. The fear of the unpredictable and sinister force of Indians will enter our bones, not so much through the eye as through the ear. Those drums! Suggestion is sometimes more effective than sight. Our imagination is allowed to do the work, for once, and does it do it!

Admiration for those responsible for the photography and technicolor of this film! Someone here is not only a technician but knows the meaning of composition and is an artist.

G.

ROSEANNA MCCOY

Starring: Joan Evans, Farley Granger, Charles Bickford, Raymond Massey, Richard Basehart, Gigi Perreau. **Producer:** Samuel Goldwyn. **Director:** Irving Reis. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

I had no idea until I had read the blurb after seeing this film that I had witnessed "The Mightiest Feud in History". Things are not always what they seem! All I *thought* I had seen was yet another western, a grim, sordid and squalid one indeed, with none of that breezy freshness that one usually expects and gets in such a film. If you want violent and unrelieved rough and tough stuff, here it is, but it's not the sort of fare for a pleasant evening at the pictures.

The acting was creditable and credible, with some good individual performances—that of Joan Evans in particular. But why must she be always dolled up as though she was straight from the beauty parlour when she was supposed to dwell in a squalid wild west shack? And why did not our hero spit out the hornet's poison which he had sucked from her arm? And since he didn't, why didn't he die from it, and so spare everyone—ourselves included—the torture of this sorry story? Perhaps just to give us the satisfaction of seeing them both ride off on horseback in the light of the silvery moon (or sun) to the tune of angelic voices. We could have been spared that too.

G.

OUT OF TRUE

Starring: Jane Hylton and Muriel Pavlov. **Director:** Philip Leacock. **Distributors:** C.O.I. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 40 minutes.

Mental disease has long had an attraction for the film script-writer. Not always has the subject been treated either accurately or truthfully. *Out Of True* is an attempt to avoid the faults of other films on the subject while soliciting sympathy for sufferers from this sad affliction. It invites comparison with the American *Snake Pit* and comes out of the comparison with considerable merit. Perhaps to English minds the film rings truer only because the American system has to be taken on trust through films. Jane Hilton as the girl patient, scores a well-deserved success. Talking to me after the Press Show, she said that she had always had the greatest concern for people who were mentally sick and she hoped that her efforts in this part would contribute to a better understanding both of those who are patients in mental hospitals and also to those whose work it is to treat mental disease.

V.

THE HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS

Starring: Thomas Gomez, Dorothy Dandridge, Bill Walker, and the Original Harlem Globetrotters. **Director:** Phil Brown. A Columbia Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

There is nothing pretentious or involved about this film. It is simply a story woven round the exploits of a basket-ball team in America. The basket-ball matches are most exciting, which is a good thing, as the major part of the film is basket-ball matches. Of course, if you don't like basket-ball, don't go and see this film. And if you do like basket-ball, well you sure will see basket-ball. But then basket-ball isn't quite what we think of as basket-ball, so you go to see basket-ball as she is played in U.S.A. And even love is subjected to basket-ball, which is quite an achievement over there, so that basket-ball has to be subjected to love at one stage, but of course basket-ball wins in the end, and so do the Globetrotters, because the Globetrotters

sure play mighty fine basket-ball . . . Oh yes, that's just about where we came in.

M.

CALL ME MISTER

Starring: Betty Grable, Dan Dailey, Danny Thomas, Dale Robertson, Benay Venuta, with the Dunhill Dance Trio, Frank Fontaine. **Producer:** Lloyd Bacon. **Director:** Fred Kohlmar. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

If you have studied, through the medium of Hollywood films, the history of the war which ended in 1945, you will be aware that it was won by the American armed forces. But you may not have realised hitherto how their morale was sustained. It was principally by means of two CATS, Betty Grable and her accompanist. (I thought the designation very ungallant until I found out that it meant Civilian Actress Technicians.) Supporting artists were recruited from the soldiers themselves. The period of the film is that between the surrender of Japan and demobilisation, after which G.I.s resume the prefix of "Mr." (hence the title).

I found some of Danny Thomas' lines and business amusing, but the rest was mostly the usual routine of song, dance and lug. When I got tired of looking at the screen, I glanced at my neighbour, a young American. His feet beat time; his chewing gum revolved with enthusiastic rapidity. For one ecstatic moment he could no longer keep silence. "That's Betty," he said.

Those who are familiar with films in which Miss Grable appears will not be surprised to hear that the usual care is taken to display her legs from time to time. I feel that I may be disqualified from passing judgment on the propriety or otherwise of this exhibition—which admittedly only lasts for a very small proportion of the running time—by the fact that I hold the very heterodox opinion (which this picture has only served to confirm) that the legs in question are the reverse of beautiful. Not all of us are able to appreciate some forms of contemporary architecture.

Q.

THERE IS ANOTHER SUN

Starring: Susan Shaw, Maxwell Reed, Laurence Harvey, with Hermione Baddeley, Leslie Dwyer and Meredith Edwards. **Director:** Lewis Gilbert. **Distributors:** Butcher's Film Service. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

The amount of money spent on a film has no necessary relationship to its excellence or otherwise. Though this film is not to be thought of as a masterpiece of cinematic art, it is refreshing to learn that for £40,000 it has been possible to produce a picture with atmosphere, excitement, pleasing stars and entertainment value which compares very well with other productions that have cost five times as much.

The main characters are a young boxer who has a doglike loyalty for a worthless speedway rider and who is saved from the unwholesome friendship by the love of a good girl and the death of the rider when the police catch up with him.

The old stagers, Leslie Dwyer, Hermione Baddeley and Meredith

Edwards, steal the picture, but audiences will, I think, be attracted by Laurence Harvey, a good-looking, friendly, though not very competent young actor. With more experience and firm direction he will fulfil the promise which he gives in this film as the young boxer. Susan Shaw is charming and does all that is required of her. Maxwell Reed, again the bad man, has evidently wearied of his bad character and does not even try to be good (in the cinema sense, I mean). He has now gone to Hollywood to join the growing band of exiles who could not find what they wanted in Britain.

V.

YOUNG WIVES' TALE

Starring: Joan Greenwood, Nigel Patrick, Derek Farr, Guy Middleton, Helen Cherry. **Producer:** Victor Skvitzky. **Director:** Henry Carr. **Distributors:** A.B.C. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes *approx.*

This is a good comedy in which we see what complications can arise when young married couples are forced to live together on account of housing shortage. Things are bad enough when ordinary (as we like to say, "normal") people are forced to live together; but when one of the couples comprise two starry-eyed artists there arises the untranquillity of disorder.

With such a brilliant cast this comedy was bound to be a success. It has pace and grace; its humour is rich and spontaneous; and underneath the fun may be found the moral that man and wife were meant to live alone in their own house, if not in their own castle. Such a team of brilliant players prevents the play becoming too heavy.

Comparisons are odious when there is all-round brilliance; nevertheless it is fair to say that Joan Greenwood once more proves that she is no mere actress but an artiste. She plays the part of the feather-brained, doting little newly-wed wif with remarkable skill and integrity. I would also like to pay tribute to Helen Cherry, who plays a small part with restraint and reality.

E.



Laurence Harvey

PAYMENT ON DEMAND

Starring: Bette Davis, Barry Sullivan.
Producer: Jack H. Skirball.
Director: Curtis Bernhardt.
Distributors: R.K.O. Radio Pictures. *Certificate:* A. *Running time:* 90 minutes.

If you are not yet tired of the story of the disillusioned husband who thinks divorce the only way to something better than the wealth and position an ambitious wife can provide, then you may get some pleasure from a film that has little new in it except a few odd trimmings. "I made him . . . now I'll break him," sums up the wife's sentiments, and the process of breaking is a hard and bitter one. Though the wife (Bette Davis) acts well and must follow her script, you will have to be pretty hard-boiled to stand strident, high-pitched, snappy staccato with never a moment's comic relief or play for the finer emotions. Even the few moments of reverie with memories of marriage and their early struggles can't quite balance the stern, stark realism and the things in poor taste that could offend the least fastidious. The all too familiar rich home, the country club, the luxury liner would be more easily endured if room were found for even a little subtlety and finesse. Even though events are so arranged as to bring about a final triumph of heart over mind one feels

that the final reconciliation is too artificially devised to be convincing.

W. A.

AL GENNINGS OF OKLAHOMA

Starring: Dan Duryea, Gale Storm, Dick Foran. **Producer:** Rudolph C. Flothow. **Director:** Roy Nazarro. **Distributors:** Columbia Pictures. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 80 minutes approx.

This is the story of Al Gennings, who was born with a hot temper which got him into hot water, "plenty". He became a lawyer and took the law into his own hands in order to clean up Oklahoma, during which time one of his brothers is shot by one of the bad boys about town. Al sets out to avenge his brother's death; in self-defence he kills his brother's murderer.

Al the lawyer now runs away from the law and becomes an outlaw and leader of a band of bandits. He robs banks and express offices, and holds up trains. A price of 25,000 dollars is put on his head. A woman betrays him. He is imprisoned after the judge has interfered with the verdict of the jury. Later Roosevelt has him released.

As a Wild Western it gets by; but I have my doubts about all this rough stuff and glorification of trigger-happy outlaws.

I thought the photography the best feature of the film.

E.

CONTINENTAL FILMS. By V.

IL MULINO DEL PO

(The Mill on the River)

Starring: Carla Del Poggio and Jacques Sernas, with Giacomo Giuradei. **Director:** Alberto Lattuada. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 90 minutes approx.

This film is one of a group of what I would describe as the less sensitive, more frankly melodramatic Italian school. Though it was much thought of at the Cannes and Venice Festivals two years ago, I fear I thought it both

noisy and tedious. This is probably due to the fact that it was taken from a novel by Riccardo Bachelli dealing at great length with the story of a tragic love during the agrarian conflicts in nineteenth-century Italy. It is not easy to reduce a lengthy biographical novel to film terms and proportions.

The photography is, of course, excellent and one or two sequences are superb. The acting of the two principals is full-blooded and impressive and some of the crowd scenes are very well-handled. On the whole, not the best Italian vintage, but sufficiently attractive to those whose taste runs to grand opera.

L'ARMOIRE VOLANTE

(The Cupboard Was Bare)

Starring: Fernandel, with Florencie, Berthe Bovy and Maxiimilienne.

Director: Carlo Rim. **Distributors:** Films de France.

Certificate: A. **Category:** A.

Running time: 88 minutes.

An old plot with a new twist. Alfred Puc's rich aunt dies of the cold in a furniture van and is placed for safety in a wardrobe. Unfortunately the wardrobe and the van containing it are stolen. Thereupon commences a wild chase to discover the whereabouts of the wardrobe and its mortified occupant. Alfred, in order to obtain his aunt's legacy, finds that he must demonstrate to the lawyer that she is not only dead but diseased. This, without the body, is not easy to do.

A fantastic pursuit of the missing wardrobe contains most of the expected and many unexpected twists and makes this a very amusing film. Fernandel as Alfred is the personification of civil servitude.

BALLERINA

Starring: Mira Redina, Victor Kozanovich and Galina Ulanova.

Director: Alexander Ivanovsky.

Distributors: Concorde Film Distributors. **Certificate:** U.

Category: C. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

This is the first Russian film to be seen in London for a long time. I do not know under what Governmental arrangement the film has been allowed into England. If it is on a basis of exchange, I fear that the Russians will get the worst of the bargain for it is certain that few films we have produced for a long time could equal this one for charm, decency and sheer entertainment. It is ironic that the Russians should teach us that a film does not need to be moronic to be decent. This one is, perhaps, even too austere in its demands for seamliness. Not one embrace, and the reunited lovers at the close of the film beam happily at one another across a court-way! Make-up, too, is sparingly used, which is all to the good. Men and

girls both look more human for this restraint.

The story is the simple one of boy meets girl, estrangement through misunderstanding and eventual reunion. The boy is a singer, the girl a ballet dancer. They both perform their parts with conviction. The ballet scenes on the stage of the Marinsky Theatre, Moscow, are the most perfect and beautiful I have seen in a film.

A curious lapse (?) in a Russian film: the girl's grandfather, anxiously watching her performance on the day which is to mean success or failure to her, traces a Sign of the Cross in the air while he mutters his prayer for her. Is it that as he is so old, the Masters of Russia can forgive him a superstition which the young do not need? Or is there some deep trap for the unwary Westerner? The Party Line appears in a very harmless form in a Song in Praise of Leningrad.

The camera-work is pleasantly calm and effectual. No arty angles to complicate the simple visual narrative. Altogether, a film to see and enjoy.

FOUR IN A JEEP

Starring: Viveca Lindfors, Ralph Meeker, Michael Medwin, Yoseph Yadin and Dinan. **Director:** Leopold Lindtberg. **Distributors:** Film Traders Limited. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 96 minutes.

When the Swiss make a film for international consumption it can always be depended upon to be truly international in its approach. You will remember *Marie Louise*, *The Last Chance*, *The Search*: all films which were something more than programme-fillers and sent their audiences away in a thoughtful and stimulated mood. Which is one of the elements in the meaning of "recreation".

In this story of the International Zone of Vienna today we have a cross section of the problem which is taxing the minds of the politicians as well as the people who have the true welfare of mankind at heart. Four soldiers share a jeep, each representing one of the occupying powers, each trying to administer order if not justice according to the dictates of the nation he



"... Have you any news of my son?"

A scene from "Four in a Jeep"

represents. The soldiers themselves are decent enough. They have to avoid embarrassing their superiors by too much display of humanity. No "incidents", at all costs. The American cannot endure seeing people "pushed about". So he interferes when it is the turn of the Russian soldier to take command. The British and French soldiers would leave well alone, but they, too, share something of the American's dislike of totalitarian methods. They, too, therefore, are engulfed in the struggle in the heart of the Russian soldier between obeying orders and the urge to humanity.

One is not quite sure what this film is trying to say. It simplifies the situation unduly, but it still leaves the essential problem as complex as ever. There are heartrending scenes, as in *The Last Chance*. The return of the prisoners is one of the most moving. This film does what the American *Red Danube* failed to do. It makes us believe in the characters it shows us. The French and the British soldiers

are the most recognisable. The Russian and American would seem to be types rather than persons. But they all live and they have us living with them.

The players are, practically without exception, first-class. Viveca Lindfors as the woman whose husband the soldiers try to assist is magnificent in her integrity. Michael Medwin is the Cockney par excellence: no national prejudice here; he is really good. Dinan and Paulette Goddard as the French soldier and his wife are superb. It is part of the honesty of the film that it is the Frenchman who has his wife and family with him in Vienna.

Another aspect of the integrity of the film is that it is played without subtitles. Thus, without destroying the ability of the English audience to understand the film, they are placed in the predicament of the characters on the screen when they are unable to understand what the other people are saying.

A magnificent film and one to be seen again and again.

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- (2) "Alice in Wonderland" (41 frames).
- (3) "Hansel and Gretel" (40 frames).
- (4) "Dick Whittington" (40 frames).
- (5) "Treasure Island" (40 frames).
- (6) "Puss in Boots" (37 frames).
- (7) "Robinson Crusoe" (40 frames).
- (8) "Cinderella" (41 frames).
- (9) "Aladdin" (37 frames).
- (10) "Jack and the Beanstalk" (40 frames).
- (11) "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" (45 frames).
- (12) "Tom Thumb" (33 frames).

There are two alternative titles:

- "The Three Bears" (36 frames).
- "Sinbad the Sailor" (40 frames).

A good representative list of children's stories, and a variety yet greater than the titles suggest. No general review is adequate, though one general remark can be made: the colouring is excellent, being both vivid and harmonious, and the interpenetration of light which projection

involves enchants the children and renders the atmosphere of fairyland. Yet a general warning is to be added: these film strips should not be bought "en masse" in the box of 12; they are uneven in merit and must be individually considered.

Of the fourteen, eleven are in "cartoon form"; but for a few only is this an aptly chosen style. The peasant-ogre themes of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Puss in Boots* are well fitted by it, as also the gnome world of *Snow White* and the fantasy of the *Three Bears*. But the heroines have suffered: not only is Goldilocks badly drawn to deformity and Snow White made to lose all the delicacy and simplicity essential to her story, but these and the Princess in *Puss in Boots* and even *Cinderella* herself are mere sophisticated misses—an objectionable type. And as a type, they will impress themselves on the children's inner imaginative life, not a desirable effect. This touches a consideration of the first importance too often overlooked. The use of visual aids is urged upon teachers because by them certain kinds of knowledge are conveyed more clearly, vividly and lastingly than by any other means. But one must be the more highly critical of the kind of knowledge that is so successfully imparted and the quality of the images by which the imagination is being filled. If not entirely decadent, the cartoon is an art form which renders its subjects ludicrous and ought not to be used except for the comic or purely fantastic. To present literary classics such as *Treasure Island* or *Alice in Wonderland* in this manner is to prostitute our inheritance and to wrong our children: they have the right to meet the author in his chosen medium of words and build their own imaginative interpretation directly. If illustration is to be attempted it must be kept very close to the spirit of the author, and stimulate rather than impress the

mental powers of the child. *Robinson Crusoe* (not in cartoon form) strikes one as being most commendable in this respect, as also a delightful artistic achievement. *Alice in Wonderland* may be said to have retained the flavour of the original story more successfully than *Treasure Island*, but a brown rabbit instead of the White Rabbit aroused strong protest from a class of eight and nine year olds, who also censured the artist because Alice was three-fingered, not once but consistently. All deviations or notable omissions in well known stories are quickly noted and disliked by children. What may cause their teachers to shudder are such errors as mar the captions of Tom Thumb; his brothers are said to have "laid" down on the grass to sleep, and Tom "lead" them out of the wood. Such slight slips are the more to be deplored as they could so easily have been avoided and do lessen the educational value of the strips. For education is continuous and comprises all experience, and what is devised for the children, be it as education or entertainment, is all formative, for better or for worse.

The series includes stories for the whole junior age range, but the age of the children who are to have each story might have been more carefully considered. Thus *Jack and the Beanstalk*, which is very pleasing and handles the repetitive characteristics of the story perfectly, has just one blemish: the black shadow of the giant in the chase is likely to have fearful repercussions in the mind of a child young enough to enjoy the story. Again *Treasure Island* is a story for children of nine and over who can confidently distinguish between fact and fiction and therefore control any terror which Long John Silver might inspire. But this Long John inspires no terror and the comic cartoon lacks the seriousness which the adventure theme has for children of this age.

Children may laugh at and enjoy cartoons and therefore these may be judged "good entertainment". But they vitiate taste and enjoyment that is truer because more thoughtful; and probably the only reason why children accept them is that they are given so much of them. Certainly *Ali Baba* was much disliked by one group of children "because of the pictures"; indeed this story, though traditionally

for children, is thoroughly unpleasant and no good food for them, and the cartoon style instead of giving romance but shows up the crudities, in spite of the magical settings.

Hansel and Gretel is a lovely little strip, outstanding all for the younger children, and is the work of the same artist as *Robinson Crusoe*. *Dick Whittington* has much charm and imaginative appeal, and *Cinderella* is commendable—in spite of the weak and characterless godmother.

It was noted that in all this series the backgrounds excellently suggest the setting and atmosphere each story requires. *Aladdin* is unmistakably in the China and *Ali Baba* in the Arabia of our imaginations; the perils and attractions of the sea, the natural loveliness of the countryside and the other-worldliness of fairyland are consistently well rendered in proper place.

The story commentaries are well done, simple and short. They are to be preferred, when available, to the captioned versions, and of course leave the teller free to adapt slightly as the ages of the audience require.

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BOOK REVIEW

Le Cinéma pour Africains. By L. Van Bever. Cahiers Belges et Congolais, No. 14, Brussels.

It is a good thing to be reminded that the film is universal. *Le Cinéma pour Africains* deals with the use of films in the mass education of the natives of the Belgian Congo. As the cinema is the speediest and most efficient means of influencing and civilising these people, it is necessary for colonial governments to have a department dealing with films, and also a definite policy concerning them. M. van Bever, the author of this pamphlet, is the head of such a department of the government of the Congo. Mere censorship of films is not enough if the African is to get a true impression of the life of the white man. Certainly, this often leaves much to be desired, but we do not spend our entire lives in dance halls, night clubs, opium dens and police courts. What is needed is that films should be made specifically for the African.

The first half of the book deals with the production of these films, showing the adaptation of film-making technique to the more primitive mentality of the natives; plots must be simple, scenes long and continuous, subjects suitable as anything violent rouses the latent battle instinct.

Where possible Africans themselves should be employed by the film units. Since 1948, there has been at Accra, on the Gold Coast, a School of Cinematographic Studies, where after a six months' course each group of Africans makes a short film. These trained assistants are of great value to the British Colonial Film Unit of whose work a short account is also given. Although there is not a similar school in the Belgian Congo, the natives are

taught the job and many of the photographs in the pamphlet show them doing technical work.

Nor is it hard to find the good actor. The African man is completely free from camera shyness and tends rather to overact. It is the women who are unreliable. Even when one has been persuaded to take a rôle, she generally refuses to act before the camera, and a nurse or a school assistant who is more used to European ways is asked to take the part.

In the second half of the pamphlet an account is given of distribution and projection, both presenting great problems because of the distances and difficulties of communication. However, in 1949 there were 1,560 showings of films in 486 different places to 23,400 Europeans and 1,826,138 natives. Many of the films are not made for the African and are too difficult for him to follow. Of the foreign ones he prefers those about animals, sport and the things familiar to him. The actual shows are given at fixed places such as schools and missions, and out-of-doors by mobile cinemas. Eventually, says M. van Bever, when there are more films for Africans about Africans, the cinema in the Belgian Congo will be a great power for good.

There are a number of interesting photographs and the text is well printed. In addition to the bibliography at the end, there are three appendices listing films made by "Congofilms" (the government film unit), legislation relating to the cinema in the Belgian Congo, and finally a full description of the equipment and staff of a mobile cinema.

This informative pamphlet is No. 14 of the series *Cahiers Belges et Congolais*, published in Brussels.

M. A.

COVER PERSONALITY

For article on Dan O'Herlihy, this month's Cover
Personality, see page 198

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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



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THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

Organ of the Catholic Film Institute

Vol. IV

August 1951

No. 8

INTRODUCING MR. BLUE

Mr. Blue, a sort of modern St. Francis, is the creation of Myles Connolly, a Catholic film script-writer who lives in California.

Mr. Blue is a best seller in America. "It is easily the most striking thing of its kind which has been published in the decade," says the *Providence Journal*. I have no doubt that before long it will reach our shores.

Mr. Blue should interest readers of *Focus* because he has some pertinent and positive things to say about the cinema . . .

"He had been talking about art and artists. He had little use for the art that is kept in galleries and museums and in the halls of the rich. He had little use for that kind of art, he said, even when it was put in a public square. The art he liked was dynamic art, the art that changed skylines, the art that created beautiful customs, that inspired men and women to love one another, the art in brief that transformed lives. The art that would do that tomorrow, he maintained, was the art of the motion picture.

"Once," he said, "the cathedral builders and the troubadours, interpreting truth, created a beauty that was as current as language and almost as essential as blood. Then came the printed word to spread confusion, to throw a twilight over the world in which men became little more than shadows chasing shadows. But, now, we have a new art, luminous, vivid, simple, stirring, persuasive, direct, universal, illimitable—the animated picture.

"It can create a new people, gracious and graceful, sensitive, kindly, religious, a people discovering in beauty the happiest revelation of God. No art has ever had the future that the motion picture has. If it fails, no art shall have had as great and lamentable a failure."

EDITOR,

A New Series

Films on a Desert Island

It seems to me that the world goes more and more crazy each day; or, maybe, I myself have gone crazy. It could well have happened as a consequence of the years I spent alone. For years I was "monarch of all I surveyed", never hearing a human voice and starting at the sound of my own. It all happened many years ago; now I have been asked to tell about it. I hope I can do so dispassionately. If you can imagine what sort of crime merits the punishment of being sent to a desert island for three years (and don't let your imaginations run away with you) and the kind of man who would be guilty of such a crime, then you know enough about me; so thus equipped, let us travel to my Island of "X." in the South Pacific.

There I was left one lovely evening and as I watched the ship that abandoned me disappear over the horizon, without any warning, dark night descended, and the horror of that first night will remain with me to my dying day.

That Forlorn Feeling

I had been assured the place was not inhabited by human beings which was, I thought, just as well because I did not want to encounter the natives for the first time at night. After a while I was not so sure of that, and as the night wore on I was quite sure that any sort of human being, even one with a stone axe looking for my flesh and blood, would have been preferable to the din of the night. Birds and beasts and darkness and flies and bats, all the horrors that I had heard about were there to baffle description by any words of mine. Somehow, all of a sudden, it was dawn again: brilliant dawn arrived as rapidly and unexpectedly as the night had come on. With the day came the quieter activity of living and the forlorn feeling all over me mingled very ill with the breath-taking, luxuriant beauty around me.

I Adjust Myself

Either I must adjust myself or go mad and because the urge to live was strong and because the urge to retain, as far as possible, my former mode of living till I returned to organised life was also strong, I decided to forget that I was a criminal and make use of my time in exile. It was not easy, gradually it came and gradually I wandered further from the shore and made little clearings for camping, and in time I got round the whole island. In time, too, because I am interested in such things, I got to know some of the flowers, the habits of the various animals and sometimes I sat for hours watching them in wonder and fascination; sometimes I used to lie down on the shore and listen to the endless breaking of the mighty sea on the coral reef and meditate on the strength of the sea and Him Who had made it and the persistence and faith of the insect that built up and continued to build the reef, even against such power; and so the days went by in a lovely peaceful way, but each pair of days was bridged once again by a night that sounded to me like all hell let loose and then I longed for the day when I would once again see that ship coming to take me back to society, even though society had cast me out. As I said, that was long ago—therefore life was not so pleasant on a desert island. In these days people who are condemned to a desert island are allowed to make some limited requests, among them gramophone records, and sometimes they are asked to state their reasons for choosing certain records. Quite recently it has been thought that it would be a good idea to give the poor exile a choice of some films, also to take with him to his island, so you see conditions must have improved considerably.

Although I hope it won't happen again, here is my selection of films I would like to be able to see on my island.



PREPARING TO ESCAPE
A scene from "The Wooden Horse"

(I)

The Count de Monte Cristo for Donat's Voice

I have always, since I first heard his voice, had a great admiration for Robert Donat. I first heard that voice many years ago in *The Count de Monte Cristo*. I have seen it recently again and though it was plain to even such a layman as myself, that it lacks many things in technique it is, judged by the present day standards, still one of my favourite films. It has always been my

desire to be a really good speaker and surely Robert Donat is a lesson to anybody in that art. You may say what about Alec Guinness in *The Mudlark*? I put against that Robert Donat in the *Winslow Boy*; also his short feature appearance in *Captain Boycott* and his complete volte face with just one or two glimpses of the speaker in *The Cure for Love*. In these films he appealed very strongly to me, but in none so strongly as when to the consternation of all present he put the King's Attorney on the stand and pushed him round the packed courtroom and in

fury of passion, which was yet completely controlled—something only an accomplished speaker can do—he, with a final push, handed over the prisoner to France. In addition to his power as a speaker, another fascinating feature of that film of *Monte Cristo* was and is, after all these years, the power it gives me to imagine myself doing the same thing to the man who sent me to my Island of X.

(II)

One Night of Love for Grace Moore's Enchanting Voice

I go to the dim and distant for my next choice. I have told you of the horror of the nights on the island. I live it again and try as hard as I can to bring something to counteract that horror. What more soothing and suitable antidote than the voice of Grace Moore in *One Night of Love*? Thousands, possibly millions of people believe that fine and remarkable woman reached the height of fame and perfection in that lovely musical. I have seen the film only once and narrowly missed seeing it several times since then, and each time was a great disappointment to me. I should like to renew my acquaintance with the many other songs besides the theme song which are only half remembered. I should also like to have a clearer memory of what Grace Moore looked like because she has since died in tragic circumstances, almost at the threshold of the Church.

(III)

A Matter of Life and Death for its Originality

A Matter of Life and Death, from the famous collection of Powell and Presburger, would be my next choice. Now I have seen this film three times to date, I enjoyed it each time, and each time I saw more in it than the previous viewing. The production and photography are excellent, and photography is a hobby of mine. The colouring is exquisite and the longing, wistful way in which Marius Goring says "they are starved for technicolor up there" remains always in the mind. Then the beautiful voice of Roger

Livesey, with its rich depth and expressive power make it a memorable film, and then even in the most unexpected places and ways we find expressed the need for religion and the hereafter and expressed in a very simple open way. The pilot's belief in the after life, the portrayal of heaven which, even though it lacks technicolor, is a place where the American can "have a Coke" and the Englishman can have time off to listen to Howard Marshall as he gives a commentary on the cricket match at Old Trafford on a showery day, and citizenship of heaven, like that of America, gives equal rights to all. It is such things as these that make it a film to see often.

(IV)

The Browning Version for Redgrave's Study of a Lonely Man

On a desert island one has to be content with small pleasures and blessings. To help us out in this matter we have the example of the Classics Master in *The Browning Version*, portrayed by Michael Redgrave. His life was drab and dreary and frustrated and his wife also had a drab and dreary existence. Into her life came another man for a time. Into his came just a boy, who was a real schoolboy in the best and the worst senses who, though he would never allow the others to even guess at it, had a great affection and respect for "the Crock" which he showed by giving him a book he might like. It is all very touching and very sad, too, because we never like having our faith in others destroyed: it hurts too much and the contrast between the master's gratitude and the brutal way his faith in the boy is uprooted is brought out very well indeed. There are other features of the film which don't go very well with the superb character-study given by Mr. Redgrave, but his performance alone is enough to make it a desert island favourite choice.

(V)

The Wooden Horse for its Courage

Being on a desert island also calls for courage and resourcefulness and an example is to be found in *The Wooden Horse*. The horror of the prison camp,

guarded by men and dogs, escape activities covered by strenuous gymnastics, the eccentric who clumped about with an awful row, and was very useful on the night of the actual escape, the humour, and little discomfitures which came with each day, the quiet evenings when the men settled down to their handicrafts, or to sleep, or to listen to the gramophone. The breath-taking suspense of the actual escape, the test by ordeal of the ex-prisoner's good faith and the final coming to a place of safety: all very cheering and comforting to one who has got the urge and the will to imitate their example.

And now, that is all I am allowed to choose. At various times a voice has

prompted other films to be chosen and now a voice says quite loudly and recognisably: What about *One Wild Oat* instead of *The Wooden Horse*? Really, friend, you have lost your grip on things. This is a desert island and why do you come to taunt me with the impossible?

My name, by the way, is:

BEN GUNN.

P.S.—The Editor seems to like my ideas about "Desert Island Films" and, therefore, he and I would like to see what other people might choose in similar circumstances.

B. G.

Dean Stockwell

Hollywood's newest child candidate for stardom is now gaining fame in his home town, but it took a trip to New York to do it. Although born in North Hollywood on March 5th, 1936, Dean Stockwell went unnoticed by film studios until his performance in the Theatre Guild Production, "Innocent Voyage", drew the acclaim of New York critics.

Dean, whose father, Harry Stockwell, starred as Curly in the Chicago company of "Oklahoma" and in the Broadway show "Marinka", made his film debut in *Anchors Aweigh* for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1945. His other films are *The Green Years*, *The Arnelo Affair*, *The Mighty McGurk*, *The Romance of Rosy Ridge*, *Song of the Thin Man*, *The Secret Garden*, *Stars in My Crown*, *The Happy Years*, *Kim*.

Dean comes from a family of actors. Besides his father, his 11-year-old brother, Guy, was in the New York shows "Innocent Voyage" and "Chicken Every Sunday", and his mother, Betty Veronica Stockwell, was formerly an actress.

Living in New York, Dean was asked to make a screen test for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Joseph Pasternak, the producer, happened to be in New York, searching for a youngster for an important part in *Anchors Aweigh*. He met Dean, saw his first test and asked him to do a Technicolor test for the picture. This won Dean the rôle and his contract.

Educated at a public school at Richmond Hill, Long Island, New York, and at the Martin Milmore School in Boston, Mass., Dean, between lessons, managed to travel all over the United States in his nine years. His tastes do not differ from those of other American boys of his age. He likes baseball, badminton, movies and chocolate ice cream.

When in New York, Dean made his debut on the radio by appearing in "Death Valley Days" and "Dr. Christian" with Jean Hersholt. His favourite part was that of Lee in "Death Valley Days".

Dean is a fine looking youngster—with light brown curly hair and brown eyes. His hobbies are drawing and carpentering, and he spends much of his time making model ships and planes and carving guns, swords and knives. His ambition, next to acting, is flying and he hopes some day to be able to pilot his own plane. Dean likes music, especially if it's operatic or classical.

A CORRECTION

It was stated in last month's issue that Fr. Hilary Carpenter resigned as Chairman of the C.F.I. on account of ill-health. Happily Fr. Hilary is in good health. He resigned owing to pressure of work as Provincial of the Dominican Order.

THE RECORDER

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Considerable mystery always surrounds the work of the recording department, for two reasons. First, it deals with something invisible; secondly, it is more or less invisible itself, being well behind the scenes. Even the uninitiated, who take no trouble to develop an intelligent interest in films, speak familiarly of directors and cameramen, but never of recorders, and yet the latter share equal responsibility with cameramen, for upon their ability to record to perfection everything we hear, depends the success or failure of films.

Perhaps the simplest non-technical way to describe a recorder is as "the other cameraman". We have learnt of the cameraman who films all the *visible* action, and should remember that he always films that action in *silent* form. Voices, sounds and music are of no interest to him. It is "the other cameraman", the recorder, who, ignoring what a scene looks like, concentrates on filming all the voices and sounds occurring in that scene. Thus two cameras are at work, one for picture, the other for sound, and they have one thing in common—both are driven by the same source of electric power so that they run at exactly the same speed. Any variation would mean that visible movements and corresponding sounds could never be synchronised.

The recording camera is loaded with a roll of negative as in the picture camera. It is connected, via a Mixing Panel, to the microphone which hangs over the scene, invisible to the picture camera, of course. The Mixing Panel is the control. From here volume is adjusted to the right level. All sounds passing through the microphone and panel travel into the recording camera, where the film is unrolling at a speed of ninety feet per minute. As it unwinds, the negative passes over a tiny slit behind which is an exciter lamp, which results in hundreds of exposures being made as the sounds

occur—wavy lines or jagged peaks, and when this negative is developed and printed, the sound track is ready to be synchronised with the corresponding visuals taken by the picture camera at the same time.

To achieve first class results, the recorder has to place his microphone, either stationary or mobile (on the end of a silently moving boom), so that it shall not be seen by the picture camera, nor cast a shadow on the walls of the scene. So important is the placing of the microphone that sometimes lighting has to be completely changed, furniture moved, and the positions of the characters altered to accommodate it. The recorder, too, hears all the sounds which must *not* be recorded—rustling dresses, scrapings, heavy breathing, and so on, which have to be silenced.

The sound camera operator takes his instructions from the recorder who is controlling the Mixing Panel. The term "mixing" more correctly applies to blending several tracks together. Maybe music, recorded separately, has to form a *background* to a conversation, and so the two tracks are mixed, so that neither drowns the other. When several tracks have to be mixed, they are run simultaneously through a sound projector, and pass through separate sound channels to the Mixing Panel, where each is controlled by a separate dial. The mere touch of a dial will increase or reduce the volume of a track, and it is the manipulation of several dials (sound channels) which is known as mixing. By this means the sounds in one scene can be faded in or out at will, and another introduced, or several sound tracks can be laid over each other. The process can be likened, in some ways, to the broadcasting of a play in which several microphones are employed, one fading in as another fades away.

When recording music, the recorder needs an ear as sensitive as a conductor's. An orchestra may look

impressive, but in all probability a number of the instruments have to be moved into new positions to create the right balance for recording. And to give emphasis to certain passages, the wood, or wind, or brass will need to be recorded separately, and the whole assembled into a unity afterwards.

Indeed, the recorder's job is one of the most difficult in filmdom—and, by the way, do not blame him if a film is inaudible to you, for in all probability this is due to faulty projection, or a very worn positive print. A recorder is never satisfied with mediocre sound, and so loss of clarity is generally traceable to causes within the cinema.

C.F.I. NOTES

Catholic Film Exhibition

The Conference and Exhibition of Catholic Films which is being organised by the Birmingham Youth Group is now definitely to take place at Soli House, Stratford-on-Avon, from October 1st to 5th inclusive. It will open on the Monday evening and conclude on Friday morning. The fee is 15s. per day inclusive. Bookings should be made through the Rev. T. S. Copsey, M.A., Soli House, Stratford-on-Avon.

The Conference and Exhibition is open to priests and laymen who have done practical film work and are willing to show their films at Soli House during the Conference and discuss the possibility of organised production in the future. It will be beneficial to all to have the comments and experience of each with regard to his own and other members' work.

The places for accommodation are restricted, so please make your application early.

Focus Film Course

The last lecture of the first series is due to take place just after we go to press. We shall publish a summary of the series in a forthcoming issue of Focus. In the meantime we should like to thank those who have attended the lectures so faithfully; the Canonesses of St. Augustine, who placed their lecture room at More House so generously at our disposal and the lecturers who gave of their experience and knowledge in the subjects under discussion and who also went to considerable trouble to be present in spite of pressing engagements in other directions.

It is hoped to arrange the second series of lectures, on the practical

aspects of film-making, towards the end of the autumn. These lectures will take place at a later hour and a different day than 3 p.m. on Saturday. Though this time was fixed at the request of some nun teachers who found it difficult to be present at any other time, it has been discovered that the majority of potential students find Saturdays almost impossible to fit in with other engagements.

Though the lectures were geographically restricted to London audiences (two enthusiastic nuns, however, came each time from Horsham!), there is no reason why they should not be given again in the provinces if people are keen enough. Not necessarily the same lecturers, but the same subjects and under the same supervision.

Curé d'Ars film available in 16mm.

There is an increasing interest among Catholic users of 16mm. projectors in French films. Since *Monsieur Vincent* set such high standards and raised the hopes of those who think mainly in terms of religious films, there have been a large number of enquiries as to future productions. Unfortunately, the film producers do not have sufficient commercial success with their religious subjects to encourage them to venture into the same field too often. However, there is good news for those who have been waiting for the release of the *Sorcier du Ciel*, the story of the Curé d'Ars, in 16mm. "Films de France", the London distributors who have the English rights, now inform us that it has been reduced to sub-standard gauge. The various societies will now be busy making up their autumn programmes so it is advisable to send in bookings for *Sorcier du Ciel* as soon as possible.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;

C, family audiences; D, particularly for children

THE LAVENDER HILL MOB

Starring: Alec Guinness and Stanley Holloway, with Sidney James and Alfie Bass. A Michael Balcon Production. **Director:** Charles Crichton. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 80 minutes.

Ealing Film Studios have set a standard for decent, competent, out-of-the-rut cinema entertainment. They have done more: they have brought the English scene and way of life to the screen in a manner and to a degree that recalls the better French and Italian work of the same genre. Their films are the outcome of carefully organised teamwork. T. E. B. Clarke, whose scripts for *Hue and Cry*, *Passport to Pimlico*, *The Magnet* and other light-hearted and unusual screen-subjects had the benefit of loyal co-operation from a group of film-craftsmen from Sir Michael Balcon downwards, has evidently studied public taste and takes the trouble to give it something better than it is credited with being able to appreciate.

If *Lavender Hill Mob* leaves one with a slight sense of anti-climax it is only because one wakes with a sigh as from a dream which the most law abiding of us must have indulged at some time or other. It is the delicious one of perpetrating a perfect crime which leaves us with untold riches and the power to play the rôle of Nuffield to our favourite charities!

Mr. Holland, a middle-aged, respectable, punctiliously careful bullion supervisor for the Bank of England, has thought for years of a plan to

appropriate a "cool million" in gold bars and so to live in fabulous opulence for the rest of his life. When he meets Mr. Pendlebury, manufacturer of metal souvenirs he realises that here is the one contact necessary to make his plan possible. Mr. Pendlebury is seduced, a couple of professional burglars, complete with press-cutting "testimonials" to their prowess trapped into confederacy, and the Lavender Hill Mob is complete.

The film moves through a tangle of entertaining contretemps and manages, en route, to cast many a sly dig in the ribs of police routine, bowler-hatted serfdom, to say nothing of gangster films in general and the whole business of "making your flesh creep". Withal, the tension is maintained in a masterly way and one has the supreme and hypocritical satisfaction of wishing the criminals success, confident that law and order will in no wise be loser.

Alec Guinness as Mr. Holland provides another of those superb studies which have made him our outstanding comedian. His steel spectacles, neat umbrella, bowler hat and complete control of every physical and mental detail of the make-up of the bank official are the outward trappings of a character which, for the duration of the film, he has become.

Stanley Holloway is correctly cast as Mr. Pendlebury, but his performance, though a perfect foil to Guinness's, is less a study than an outsize impression of the essential character which he has always shown us. The other members of the cast are admirably chosen and admirably support the principals in a singularly amusing and wittily written screenplay.



A SCENE FROM "THE LAVENDER HILL MOB"

Another superb study by Alec Guinness

MIDNIGHT EPISODE

Starring: Stanley Holloway. **Producer:** Theo Lagueard. **Director:** Gordon Parry. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 78 minutes.

This is a first-rate film in every respect: a good story, good photography and excellent acting. It is a thriller that really thrills and unless you are sharper than myself (which you probably are) you won't guess the murderer until he is finally unmasked.

Stanley Holloway as "The Professor" who recites Shakespeare to theatre queues and gets himself involved with the police, gives a really superb performance which it is a joy to watch from beginning to end. Leslie Dwyer as his pal Albert and Sebastian Cabot as Benno the proprietor of a café are both excellent.

Don't on any account miss this picture.

T. C. F.

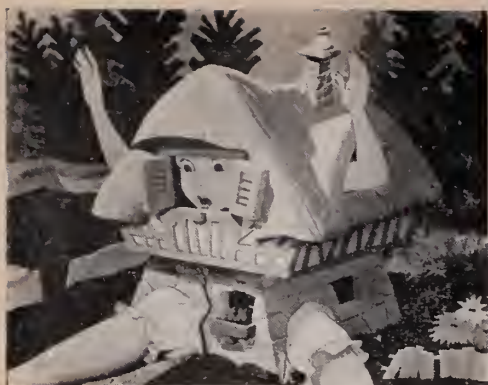
BIRD OF PARADISE

Starring: Louis Jourdan, Debra Paget, Jeff Chandler. **Associate Producer:** Harmon Jones. **Written and Directed by** Delmer Daves. 20th Century-Fox. In technicolor. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 101 minutes.

The only possibly good point of this film is the Polynesian scenery in technicolor, but even this begins to pall before the 101 minutes have run out. Otherwise I can find nothing in it to recommend: the story is a nasty pagan one of human sacrifice, the acting is bad and the dialogue objectionable in at least two places.

Don't take impressionable youngsters to see it—they would hate the sight of a young woman walking on burning coals; better still, don't go to see it yourself.

T. C. F.



"I hope I shall not grow any more"



Alice leaves the cottage



The Cat and the Queen



Tweedledum and Tweedledee

FILM OF THE MONTH

From the Story
by
Lewis Carroll

(Reviewed overleaf)



The Mad Tea Party



The Rabbit is late

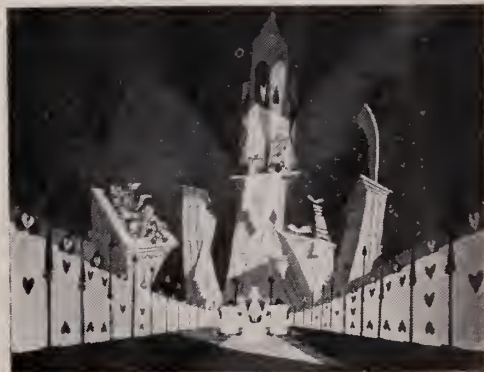
"Alice in Wonderland"



The Walrus and the Carpenter



King, Queen and Alice



The Trial

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Starring the voices of Ed Wynn, Richard Haydn, Sterling Holloway, Jerry Colonna, Kathryn Beaumont. From the story by Lewis Carroll. **Distributors:** R.K.O. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 75 minutes.*

If you are expecting this film to be pure Lewis Carroll, with John Tenniel's realistic artistic illustrations brought to life you will be disappointed.

If you are a purist who cannot endure the sight of classical characters being caricatured; if you want to keep the memory of the book intact you would be advised to give this film a miss.

If you are one of those curious people who become "curiouser" to know how Disney treats Lewis Carroll's story, you had better see it for yourself; for one man's fun is another man's fury. I guarantee that you will gather plenty of mental food for argument and debate . . . "Is any man justified in caricaturing another man's work?" "Has Disney gone Dizzy?" "Is this film a distortion?"

If you can forget Lewis Carroll's delightfully written story and John Tenniel's superb illustrations, or if you are among the few who have not read the "Alice" books and accept this film as a sort of a Walt Disney comic opera, you will probably enjoy it very much and think that Tweedledum and Tweedledee are a couple of Lancashire comedians being caricatured, and probably some of the voices will remind you of Colonel Chinstrap and other radio and music hall comedians, and I think you will have a lovely time in Walter's Funderland.

Disney is essentially a cartoonist and a caricaturist, he is too much the individualist, he is too creative and too original to reproduce or interpret in another medium another man's work. But, if you accept the principle that it is lawful for one artist to caricature another artist's work in another medium, you will have to admit that Disney has produced an interesting and amusing piece of work in the comic-strip tradition.

Lewis Carroll was a scholar, a cultured man and a distinguished

mathematician who wrote his stories to amuse children of the Victorian era; he wrote in such a dignified yet childlike style that his books are perennially pleasing to children and adults. (A doctor on the staff of a well known mental hospital once told me that he reads the Alice books at least once a year to keep him sane.)

Walt Disney's film is comical, at times rip-roaring, sometimes it approaches the childish.

It is beautifully made, technically clever and adventurous, imaginative, tuneful and colourful. It is what a friend of mine would call "pure entertainment". Alice remains reasonably close to the book. In spite of all this "fun of the fair", Walt Disney manages to keep her lovable. For which many thanks

E.

VENDETTA

Starring: Faith Domergue and George Dolenz. **Producer:** Howard Hughes. **Director:** Mel Ferrer. *Certificate: A. Category: B. Running time: 84 minutes.*

If you missed all those other films and still don't know what a Vendetta is, you might risk one and ninepence on this. Should you arrive late and so miss the narrator's comprehensive account of the Vendetta code (Corsican style), you'll find that the characters themselves make it all perfectly clear from time to time.

Faith Domergue and a ruggedly handsome newcomer (George Dolenz) do all that is demanded of them—sometimes a trifle unwillingly, one hopes, in view of the weakness of some of the dialogue. The outdoor photography is effective, and the music of Puccini pleasing, if a little too oft-repeated. You won't be profoundly moved nor highly thrilled, I venture to suggest, but you *will* find out what a Vendetta is all about, and you may get a laugh from the delightful remark of a French Gendarme who, when asked for direction, replies: "Straight arn, you cain't missut". Don't be misled by the lurid poster; unless I'm very much mistaken Miss Domergue wears only the most sober black dresses, and doesn't so much as handle a dagger.

O.

WHITE CORRIDORS

Starring: Googie Withers, James Donald, Godfrey Tearle, Petula Clark, with Moira Lister, Jack Watling, Barry Jones. **Producers:** Joseph Janni and John Croydon. **Director:** Pat Jackson. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 102 minutes.

Nurses, like nuns, have a recurrent fascination for film makers. And in both cases reality is apt to be swamped by theatrical conventions and preconceptions. Matrons and Reverend Mothers are hard and grim. Probationers and Novices are too naïve for words. Etc., etc.

And so, when I pay one of my regular visits to a hospital, I should not be surprised if one of the nurses were to say: "You ought to see *White Corridors*, Father. You'd get a good laugh." And she would be thinking of the matron dissolving into slight tears after a staff nurse has implied that she is a repressed spinster, and the same staff nurse being incredibly "upstage" and continually telling off the other nurses in the presence of the patients.

When the critics of the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* are at variance I notice that I find myself sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. In the case of this film I am with the former who is definitely the less enthusiastic.

But there is much to commend in this adaptation of Helen Ashton's novel "Yeoman's Hospital". It is a story of men and women with a sense of vocation and purpose, all human, some — as in real life — with greater weaknesses than others. On two occasions there are passing references to the dependence of the medical profession upon God which are most welcome. Only those to whom everything connected with hospitals and surgery is horrifying would have any reason to be unduly distressed. James Donald as one of the doctors and Jean Anderson as a Scottish Sister portray

particularly credible and attractive characters. Googie Withers as a lady surgeon elicits from me the respect due to a competent actress rather than the admiration provoked by genius.

The action does not extend beyond the hospital precincts and the absence of music is somehow inconspicuous.

Q.

I'D CLIMB THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Starring: Susan Hayward and William Lundigan, with Gene Lockhart, Ruth Donnelly and Alexander Knox. **Director:** Henry King. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

This film is technicolored. So is the sentiment that runs through it. It can no longer be said that Hollywood is producing religious "propaganda" films at the demand of the Vatican. Here is proof that freedom of thought also prevails in the land of the angels. A Methodist minister takes his city-bred wife to the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Georgia, U.S.A. The publicity hand-out tells me that he is an unusual minister. "He has wit and humour. He loves to race his pony and trap". He is, therefore, a much nicer minister than those you and I are accustomed to who, presumably, have not wit nor humour and do not race ponies and traps. He also has individual ideas about God: "My kind of God", he calls Him, with engaging familiarity. He is, obviously, one of those carefree types who have, instead of Faith, what Arnold Lunn calls FIF, that is to say, Funny Interior Feeling. It enables him to carry on quite well with his heterogeneous flock and makes him very broadminded. When his wife buys a smart, gaily-coloured frock she says that she is sure that "God does not like black", so it seems to run in the family. She also knows that when a smartly-dressed woman comes to consult her husband about difficulties of Bible interpretation, she really ought

to be at home looking after her own husband instead of trying to fall in love with the minister. Another peculiarity is that she insists on her husband baptising their still-born child because she is sure that it is alive somewhere and will benefit.

I wonder what our Methodist friends will think of this vacuous nonsense? It only goes to show that when Hollywood tries to put religion on the screen, they are as phony with the Protestants as they are with the Catholics.

I felt most sympathy for Alexander Knox, as the atheist. He is such an intelligent actor. Lundigan's minister and Susan Hayward's wife are box-office jam to entice the fans. The scenery, of course, is magnificent.

V.

ACE IN THE HOLE

Starring: Kirk Douglas, with Jane Sterling and Bob Arthur.

Director: Billy Wilder. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. •

In the offices of the local newspaper of the Mexican border town where this film-story takes place, the walls are decorated with needlework injunctions to "Tell the truth". The film is the story of one journalist who did not tell the truth in a big way. It is a pity that Billy Wilder, the talented producer, director and part writer of the film, did not also tell the truth. Great films like all great art are based on and adhere to truth; in the telling, the acting and the characterisation. Real people do not need to be twisted to make them dramatically more palatable. *Ace in the Hole* narrowly misses being a great film because Billy Wilder did not tell the truth.

If you remember *Double Indemnity*, *Lost Weekend* or *Sunset Boulevard*, you will be prepared for the harsh, brilliant, exciting but basely false development of *Ace in the Hole*. Wilder takes a lot of trouble with his characters but he rarely makes them credible. The dipsomaniac in *Lost Weekend* was spoilt by a last minute conversion

which was psychologically and morally unconvincing. Tatum, in *Ace in the Hole*, is too bad to be believable and too well-drawn for his change of heart at the end to be logical. Wilder seems to be holding up for examination through cynical lenses both the individuals in the story and the crowds who flock, moronically, drawn by sensation, to cavort around the old Indian mine where a man is trapped and dying. There is much matter for thought in the film, but it would have been so much more effective if it had not been forced.

The newspaper reporter has discovered the trapped man and thinks he can use the story to rehabilitate himself as a front rank New York journalist. To do this he has to keep the man entombed for at least six days. He bribes the Sheriff into ordering long-winded but spectacular rescue methods. He builds himself up as a hero by means of radio and other publicity media. Crowds gather and encamp on the site of the mine. They are stimulated by loudspeakers, souvenir-sellers and other paraphernalia for exploiting sentiment. The man's wife, a worthless hussy, makes a small fortune from selling food and petrol. Finally the man dies because it is too late to get him out the easy way. Tatum dismisses the crowds, loses the New York assignment his guile had won him, is wounded by the dead man's wife and dies as he is trying to tell the truth to the local newspaper he has hitherto despised.

Wilder's weakness is manifested by the very slickness and competence of his story and its direction. The priest, brought to the dying man at the last moment, underlines Tatum's change of heart, but it is false because the priest would have been there earlier, anyhow. The Mexican mother, praying and neglecting her clients, is also false to reality. And there are other points out of the true. Nevertheless, this is an impressive film. The atmosphere, the crowd scenes, the photography are all superb. Kirk Douglas is fiercely competent if not actually inspired. The other players fit the whole fantastic situation faithfully according to Wilder's lights. A film to see but not to believe in.

HOTEL SAHARA

Starring: Yvonne de Carlo, Peter Ustinov, David Tomlinson.
Producer: George H. Brown.
Director: Ken Annakin. A Towers Films Production.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 87 minutes.

This happy, humorous and preposterous film will find its way to everybody's heart.

With the outbreak of desert warfare, the Hotel Sahara is occupied in turn by groups of Italian, English, German and French soldiers. The main pre-occupation of the proprietor (Peter Ustinov) and his fiancée (Yvonne de Carlo) is to placate all comers, so that the hotel may be preserved intact.

The direction is smooth and the acting equal to it. If I may single out an actor without detracting from the performance of the others, it is David Tomlinson. As always he reflects so amusingly the conceited and ridiculously ineffectual creatures we so often are. And a little dose of that from time to time is a jolly good thing. But for me the most significant and encouraging feature of the film is the chivalry shown in the portrayal of our late enemies. They are caricatured, of course, but no offence could possibly be given.

As a tailpiece I protest at the posters advertising the film. They are unworthy and debasing. Cannot actors and actresses sue those responsible for loss of prestige? T.

YOU BELONG TO MY HEART

Starring: Lana Turner and Ezio Pinza with Marjorie Main, Barry Sullivan and Sir Cedric Hardwicke. An M.-G.-M. Picture.
Director: Don Hartman.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 110 minutes.

It is difficult to understand the policy which governs the organising of Press Shows. There are an increasing number of films which are not submitted to the Press these days and this is one of them. Whether it is because the subject of the film is too closely allied to recent royal history or whether it is

feared that the critics might think the story too corny and say so it is not easy to say. The film has technicolor, Hollywood, Paris, Rapallo and what the trade publicity describes as "luscious Lana", as well as an intriguing personality from the Metropolitan Opera in the baritone Ezio Pinza. The story tells of a king who wishes to abdicate in order to marry a show girl whom he met while he was Heir Apparent. She is now a film star; he follows her to Hollywood; is thought of as the male star in a story which she is making, built round her experiences with the Heir Apparent. But duty in the person of a Prime Minister is always just round the corner and references to a Plebiscite, and the young Crown Prince (at School in England) both give the story a topical tone and bring it to the expected "unhappy" ending.

Ezio Pinza sings one or two pleasing ditties, but it seems to me a woeful waste of a good baritone to ask him to support "luscious Lana". The whole film is so obviously artificial in conception and execution that there is nothing one can say about it except that it ranks as harmless entertainment which you do not have to see.

V.

WHIRLPOOL

Starring: Gene Tierney, Richard Conte, Joseph Ferrer, Charles Bickford. **Producer and Director:** Otto Preminger. 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 98 minutes.

Based, a long, long way away, on a novel which it has cleaned up and otherwise altered, the film *Whirlpool* is over the edge of psychology. This time it is hypnotism. If you can believe it all, there is plenty of excitement with a psycho-analyst (Richard Conte), his neurotic kleptomaniac wife (Gene Tierney) and the professional hypnotising villain (Joseph Ferrer).

Murder (victim, Barbara O'Neill) and Police (Charles Bickford) lead to conflict of wits between good scientist and bad charlatan. It is pretentious dress for the same old bones of heroine in tight corner rescued by sweetly tough policeman and loving husband.

X.

SHOW BOAT

Category: B. Running time: 90 minutes.

It is extraordinary how much good drama there is in Edna Ferber's story. Although one has seen it all before many times there is always a new freshness about any revival of it. This edition is bigger and better than ever produced with that lavish élan in which Hollywood has no rival. All the tunes are there again, magnificently sung with the exception of Ava Gardner's rendering of "Can't help lovin' that man o' mine". Apparently Miss Gardner has a contract to run and we shall just have to watch her mild intrusions into one film and another for some time. It is because of the sad story of Julie that one hesitates to recommend this as a family film. Although she is in the end a very noble good-bad girl, her make-up is horrific enough to give the average youngster a nightmare. That is the only flaw in this rhapsody of the river complete with happy ending. "Old Man River" has never been better sung or better produced. Most of the photographic work is superb, the acting is entirely adequate, with Joe E. Brown threatening to steal the film most of the time. It is nice to know how really pleasant Miss Agnes Moorehead can be when the directors give her a chance. Altogether one of the most enjoyable films we have been sent to see for a long time.

J. C.

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Starring: Irene Dunne, Fred MacMurray. **Producer:** Harriet Parsons. **Director:** George Marshall. An R.K.O. Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 89 minutes.*

This film falls between two stools. Its plot is the well-worn one of the town-bred girl who marries a ranch-owner and all her ensuing troubles; it can be treated either as a psychological study or as a farce, but not as both, which is what the director has tried to do in this case. Miss Irene Dunne has both charm and talent in considerable quantity: she displays these admirably

in the more serious moments of the story, but to my mind she is completely wasted when she is made to fall off horses, trip over carpets and struggle with washing drying in a high wind. However, the audience at the press show seemed to enjoy these antics heartily, and Miss Dunne certainly emerges triumphant out of all her difficulties.

You too may be amused, but as to never a dull moment—well, I can't guarantee that.

T. C. F.

OPERATION PACIFIC

Starring: John Wayne, Patricia Neal. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Director:** George Wagner. A Warner Brothers Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 110 minutes approx.*

A war film of the type with which we are all only too familiar, composed of the usual ingredients: a submarine attacked by Japs, thrilling rescues of drowning airmen, crew at work and play, interspersed with officers on leave at Pearl Harbour making love, one of them to his ex-wife. An unusual element consists of a party of nuns and children rescued from the Japs, being taken home on the submarine. I don't think any wise nun would insist on the whole crew taking caps off and keeping silence while she says grace, nor would she when unable to find adequate words with which to thank the C.O., tell him that these will come to her that evening when on her knees in the chapel—at least she would not have put it quite like that. When the same C.O. tells another officer that the nuns have brought the children through Japs and jungle "protected only by a string of beads", he pays a remarkable tribute to the Holy Rosary; but I wonder if any non-Catholic would have the faintest idea what he was talking about.

The acting is indifferent. There is one unforgettable shot of the submarine leaving harbour with the crew silhouetted against the sunset. When in an American film someone alludes to his brother as "Pop" one is apt to get relationships confused.

T. C. F.

UP FRONT

Starring: David Wayne, Tom Ewell and Marina Berti. From the book by Bill Maudlin. **Director:** Alexander Hall. **Distributors:** General Film Distributors, Universal International Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 92 minutes.

Choice of a film to review on a Wednesday landed me with yet another series of American G.I.s (now to be known as soldiers, according to official U.S. circles) doing preposterous things in the Italian Campaign.

The film is the story of "Old Bill" and his companion in arms, who manage a three day pass in Naples from the front. Old Bill, plus mud, whiskers and dislike of military police is soon arrested. The main part of the film is a mad rush through Naples in which the two inseparables get involved with an old man distilling "hooch" and his, needless to say, beautiful daughter. Finally, driving a black market truck full of army stores, they drive towards their unit, followed by most of the military police in Naples. Their arrival sends the German army into retreat, the local general promises to decorate them, the much disliked M.P.s are flung into the battle, and all is well.

Not much of a film. It is quite entertaining, but misses being really funny. Parts are very true to life, but the tale drags and there is little real comedy. You won't miss anything if you do not see it. M.

"MR. UNIVERSE"

Starring: Jack Carson, Janis Paige, Bert Lahr and Robert Alda. **Producer and Director:** Joseph Lerner. **International Film Distributors Ltd.** **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

This is a knock-you-round-the-ring all-in wrestling comedy which will amuse you if you are in the mood and can understand the jargon. But if you are not feeling that way, it will seem a long eighty-eight minutes. Plenty punches. No tears shed. No harm done. G.

GO FOR BROKE

Starring: Van Johnson, with a cast of Japanese American players. **Director:** Robert Piroosch. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

The title of this film is the motto of the American Japanese Battalion, which saw service during the war in various parts including Italy and France. It is pigeon English for "Hell for Leather", and the Japanese fighting under the American flag certainly lived up to their motto and deserved the honours heaped upon them by the President of the United States of America.

The film is very efficiently made and directed. The camerawork is excellent and the battle scenes are among the most convincing I have seen. Nevertheless, I have seldom been more nauseated by a film. It is the most cynical and deliberate piece of mass propaganda by means of the cinema that I have experienced. While our ears are still deafened by the impact of the spate of films about Pearl Harbour, and the Pacific Islands, films preaching the beastliness and treachery of the Japs, films which stopped at no epithet of approbrium to describe the "little yellow devil", we are now, at a blow, asked to forget all we have learnt and to look upon these same "yellow devils" as the salt of the earth when they serve under the Stars and Stripes. No cliché for drawing tears or stimulating emotion is omitted from the script. The lonely lad whose only pet is a pig which he has weaned, gives up his pet to make food for the starving Italian bambinos; the Chaplain (Catholic) learning that the rosary which the wounded man clasps is a Buddhist rosary; the young soldier coming up the line to find that his brother is killed; the soldiers who have been despised by the "white" Americans eventually leading their tormentors to victory, etc., etc. There are also the episodes in which two diminutive Japanese winkle out a machine-gun post manned by Italians of herculean girth and the line of hefty German prisoners brought in by a solitary undersized soldier.

I am not complaining that the Japanese are being given a "come-back" in this film. I do not need to be told, least of all by the cinema, that there are good and bad on either side of the Iron Curtain and that pigmentation has nothing to do with one's share of the consequences of Original Sin. Nor do I forget that, being a citizen of one of the civilised countries which permitted the ghastly experiment at Hiroshima, I shall always feel a sense of shame when talking to one of my yellow brothers. It is the blatant contempt for the intelligence of the cinema audiences which this film illustrates which is so sickening.

"Everyone knows what damage is done to the soul by bad motion pictures," wrote Pius XI. What damage can be done to the mind by political motion pictures? Are we safe from the the use of this all-powerful weapon in the hands of those who seek votes?

V.

MY FORBIDDEN PAST

Starring: Robert Mitchum, Ava Gardner and Melvyn Douglas.
An R.K.O. Radio Picture.
Certificate: A. Category: A.
Running time: 70 minutes.

'Pon my word, the only reason I can think of for seeing this film is that Ava Gardner looks pretty in it. But there are many reasons why this is a film definitely to be missed. It is a mawkish and torpid story, in which the characters are as nauseating as they say they are. Ava Gardner, who looks nice enough, is really a selfish hussy, and because she fails to elope with Robert Mitchum, he forthwith gets married to someone else whom he has never seen before and who is obviously the "wrong person". (If one has got the urge, one simply must get married, mustn't one?) But true love must up and wreck this heartless marriage, and the naughty Ava seeks to break it. But how conveniently it all turns out: the wife is accidentally killed, so he, a pillar of righteousness — a smug, humourless and thug-like pillar if ever there was one — is free to live happily ever after with dear Ava who now promises to go straight. What a hope. What a film. What a life.

G.

BORN YESTERDAY

Starring: Judy Holliday, William Holden, Broderick Crawford.
Producer: S. Sylvan-Simon.
Director: George Cukor. **Distributors:** Columbia Pictures.
Certificate: A. Category: B.
Running time: 102 minutes.

Harry Brock, well played by Broderick Crawford, is one of those rich Yanks who roll in fat and wealth. He is a junk dealer who has made easy millions. When the story opens, he is manipulating a huge international deal in Washington, D.C. He is big and vulgar; his voice is like the sound of a thousand cymbals; he has a girl friend (a euphemistic way of putting things!), who is as dumb as you make them and whom he clothes and houses expensively. For Harry, the *summum bonum* seems to be money. For Billie Dawn, his girl, the *summum bonum* seems to be minks; so even though Harry does push Billie around like a lump of junk, she doesn't seem to mind very much, not until . . .

Billie is a blonde, the fellow who wrote the synopsis says she is beautiful, but we can let that pass! No one will deny, however, that she is stupid and ignorant of the social graces. So ignorant that Harry realises her ignorance will be an obstacle to big business; therefore he chooses the crusading writer, Paul Verrall (William Holden), to educate her.

You do not need to be very clever to guess the rest of the story.

A little knowledge, particularly when imparted by an attractive teacher, is a dangerous thing. It is not long before the new learning makes Billie Dawn an ardent crusader of democracy and an ardent admirer, then lover, of her teacher and Harry is left to brood over his junk and his millions.

If your taste runs to satire I recommend this comedy. Today there are not enough people writing satire or taking notice of it.

E.

PS.—For playing the part of this dumb blonde, Judy Holliday received an Academy reward which she deserved. The way in which she sustains this difficult part is admirable.

BANDIT GENERAL

Starring: Paulette Goddard, Pedro Armendariz, Gilbert Roland.
Producer: Bert Granet. **Director:** Emilio Fernandez. **Distributors:** International. **Certificate:** A.
Category: C. **Running time:** 74 minutes.

Beginning with a crash in a glass factory owned by the heroine's father, this film fails at any time to get up momentum. Though the crash is to announce the arrival of the Bandit General himself (Pedro Armendariz), Maria Dolores (Paulette Goddard) and her father refuse to be intimidated. A very wet scene among the aristocrats, torn between tears and prayer gives place to shows of brutality on the part of the General, who however recognises a long lost pal in the local priest. This strong silent individual continues to appear, warning the heroine not to come to Mass or go out alone and telling the General who she is and why he cannot marry her.

Meanwhile, her American lover, who is a doctor in his spare time, goes off, conveniently, to get supplies, and Maria meets the attentions of her new suitor, the General, first with her beefy face-slapping tactics, but later with hidden tears. The only amusing incident is when she dislodges the General's dignity with a firework. However, a well-timed plague sweeps the city, and prevents Maria and her father from escaping, her American lover turns up to tend the sick, bodies are carted here and there and the priest unconvincingly prays for the dead. Maria meanwhile has been continuing to go to Mass regularly and when the opposing forces arrive to drive out the Bandit General, she appears ready for the wedding, which surprisingly seems to be happening in the best Hollywood style round the table in the front drawing-room. It is even more surprising to see the priest leaning against the door-post in an unconcerned way while they sign the register. However, the departure of the Bandit General with a fanfare of trumpets seems to have more effect in preventing this irregular marriage, as Maria Dolores suddenly decides to follow

them and is seen disappearing at the stirrup of her new hero-lover.

In fact this is a thoroughly bad film, with little excitement, no appeal to emotion that would stir even the most sensitive, and a very wild, ill-advised idea of Catholic ceremonial. Only the fact that I took someone with me to the showing prevented me from leaving much earlier than the end.

H.

HAPPY GO LOVELY

Starring: David Niven, Vera-Ellen Cesar Romero. **Producer:** Marcel Hellman. **Director:** Bruce Humberstone. **Distributors:** Associated British-Pathé. In Technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes approx.

I cannot quite make out why the events portrayed in this film are supposed to take place during the Edinburgh Festival: this supposition provides us at the outset with some quite enchanting but all too brief technicolor views of that delectable city, turns Mr. David Niven into a Scottish multi-millionaire (I doubt if such exist) and produces a crop of amazing Caledonian accents. But really, it might have all happened anywhere.

The essential is that it does happen, for it is light entertainment at its best. The scenes are sumptuous, the technicolor good, the dialogue amusing, the dancing excellent, the music if not brilliant at least gay and tuneful, while the story is as light, farcical and impossible as anyone could wish.

Miss Vera-Ellen as Janet Jones, the chorus-girl, who by a series of delightfully ridiculous events becomes the multi-millionaire's wife, dances and sings charmingly, supposing, that is, that the voice is really hers (in these days one can never be quite sure of this); Mr. Niven as the multi-millionaire is—well, Mr. Niven; Miss Diane Hart gives a most entertaining performance as Mae, Janet Jones' intimate friend; and the rest of the cast are all good.

Go and see it, it will make you laugh and forget life's worries.

T. C. F.

Catholic Film Institute

No. 2: Catholic Film Criticism

Strictly speaking it is incorrect to talk of "Catholic Film Criticism"; just as it is incorrect to talk of Catholic novels, Catholic music, Catholic art. There are, of course, novels which deal with Catholic subjects, music composed to be sung at Mass and Benediction, and art which finds its proper resting place in churches and convents. There are a few films made by Catholics which treat of religious subjects and call for criticism as such.

What is meant is that Catholics who are artists, writers, musicians, critics, bring their own special mental attitude to bear upon the subjects they are concerned with and cannot help colouring those subjects with that attitude. That is not the same thing as saying that all novels, music, art whose authors are Catholic must be shaped for use in religious surroundings, but it does mean that Catholics cannot help bringing certain fixed standards of belief and behaviour to bear upon their work even if the theme of the work is not intended to be edifying.

In the case of films we are, from the beginning, up against the fact that so few intelligent people are willing to allow that films can be discussed and defined in equal comparison with other art forms. Indeed the definition of art itself has caused many a dialectical headache and outside lecture rooms in Catholic seminaries and universities I doubt whether anybody has ever arrived at a satisfactory definition. Granting that the classical definition of St. Thomas, "*ars est recta ratio factibilium*", is valid as it applies to other media of expression, it must, I think, be considered that potentially, at least, it is valid when the form of expression is cinematic.

Father Hilary Carpenter has rendered that definition, "*a good quality or virtue of the practical intelligence, a potentiality whereby a man is in a condition of soul to envisage the proper*

ordering of things to be made by him". This, upon examination, will be seen to apply to the man who chooses to express his ideas in terms of cinema as much as to the man who expresses his ideas in terms of paint, stone or musical sounds. People are apt to be confused by the fact that most films are the product of a conglomeration of bits and pieces, persons and machines, and to suppose that, under such circumstances, it is not possible for the film finally projected upon the screen to have any connection with art. A little quiet thought should enable them to see that if a man has ideas to express and "*is in a condition of soul to envisage the proper ordering of things*" he should be able properly to order the disposition of light upon persons, places and things, viewed through a motion picture camera in such a way that the final result, projected upon the screen, comes near to being, in its own order, a work of art.

There is no time here to expand this idea; we are more concerned at the moment with the function of the critic who views the final result on the screen. We say that our object is to encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films. The critic is, above all else, a judge. That means that he must be equipped with sufficient knowledge of the subject he is judging as well as a sufficient background of culture to enable him to put his judgment of the particular subject he is criticising into its proper general context. Whereas with other art forms, a school or standard of criticism has been developed over the years, cinema is still so new, and to some people so vulgar, that on the whole little has been done to formulate a proper critique of cinema. The Church has, of course, been concerning itself with film for a longer period than those who are not of the Faith. Indeed the birth of film criticism may be said to have taken place in Belgium in the early days of

the century when the Abbé Brohee was commissioned by Cardinal Mercier to organise Catholic Action, and set himself to develop a critical approach to the beginnings of the cinema.

The Catholic who is a critic is in a stronger position than most others, for he is more likely to be equipped with an adequate moral and dogmatic background and is able to view things in that light. Indeed one might say that only a convinced Christian is able to view things in their proper context since only he is able and willing to view the things of time in the light of Eternity. That means that if a Catholic critic has made the effort to acquaint himself with the knowledge that is necessary to be able to follow his particular profession, his general background as a Christian gives him the opportunity to make judgments that are more valuable than those of critics who lack the transcendental standards against which to evaluate the forms he is considering.

It may be said that critics in general and Catholics in particular have little influence upon the general public. That is not really true. The critic who is known to be painstaking and not afraid to express his opinion truthfully has an influence beyond that of the critic who is known only as a confectioner of smart and biting witticisms. The latter may be read for amusement but the former will be read for information. Ultimately it is truthfulness in film criticism which will gain for the critic the position from which his attitude to films will assume something of the magisterial authority of the best critics in other arts.

The film critic has a wearying task. Unlike the other critics he has not a ready-made audience capable of appreciating the finer points of his critical analysis. In the case of the cinema it is probably true to say that the majority of the audience have little or no appreciation of the cultural and artistic values which may or may not be present, which may or may not have contributed to the film they are viewing. The film critic has not only to give his readers information, he has also to provide them with sufficient knowledge to enable them both to increase in knowledge about the cinema and to be able to form their own judgments.

The second part of our second object speaks about "influencing the type of films publicly exhibited". Such influence will be real only to the extent that the critic is honest. It is not enough to allow prejudices to warp his views about films. It is when he is able to convince his readers that he both knows what the film is trying to say and whether the director of the film has succeeded in saying it, that his opinion that what the film is trying to say is either good or bad will have any value. People sometimes speak of films which are artistically excellent but morally worthless. This is, I venture to think, a contradiction in terms. No matter how apparently excellent from the technical point of view a film may be, it cannot really be said to be artistically good if its moral elements are faulty. If the Thomistic definition is valid, that is to say, if the artist is "*in a condition of soul to envisage the proper ordering of the things to be made by him*" the thing made by him, whether it be a film or some other form of art, should conform to standards which are themselves the result of intellectual integrity. The Christian critic, therefore, in order to influence his readers to the greatest degree, must be completely equipped as a Christian. His evaluations must balance both spiritual and material and his judgments must take both into consideration.

There are signs today that cinema audiences are becoming more selective. It may be due to the growth of television. That, if it is true, provides another cause for alarm since the television cabinet has the effect of destroying the last refuge of those who wish to unite the family circle. However, it may be that, in fact, the deplorable level of so many films has sent the people scurrying from the glamorous invitation of the local "Odorium". The frequently heard refrain "Let's go to the pictures" suggests that the industry is getting nervous. This is surely the opportunity for the Christian film critic to get to work to do what he can to help produce the audiences which will be able both to recognise and to appreciate the good films which we are convinced the future will provide.

J. A. V. BURKE.

SCRIPT TO SCREEN*

by Andrew Buchanan, D.Litt., Ph.D.

Andrew Buchanan's latest book on the film: "Film-making from Script to Screen" is a completely revised and re-written version of the book which first appeared in 1937 and has been out of print for many years. A constant demand for copies made it clear that this simple but comprehensive course in film-making had appealed to a wide public. The author has the ability to state in lucid and not-too-technical terms, the principles and practice of a craft which has all too often been camouflaged under excessive neologism on the one hand or vulgar ostentation on the other.

Behind all that Buchanan writes about the cinema there is evident a deep concern about the misuse of film and the consequent harm that humanity can suffer from this ubiquitous instrument for diversion and the expression of ideas. Indeed one might say that his writings form the only extensive commentary at present available in English on the Film Encyclical, *Vigilanti Cura*. His purpose is "to make use of the screen to help man to discover how to overcome the material forces which are reducing him to serfdom. Film-makers possess the most powerful medium in the world. Are they to remain content to employ it solely to satisfy their technical aspirations and to provide a pleasant hour for their club friends, or are they going to devote a portion of their time to shaping films which shall make some contribution to the welfare of humanity?" Those who are familiar with the Encyclical will find this almost an echo of Pope Pius' plea for a sane and constructive use of the cinema "to give new life to the claims of virtue and to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world".

In the volume under consideration,

Buchanan outlines a complete course on simplified film-production. The fundamentals from script to screen are described and are aimed at the professional as much as at the amateur. The dedication of the book, "To the Amateur Professional and the Professional Amateur", describes both the public for which he is writing and the objective to which, ultimately, he is tending. He is a man with a deep love of and understanding of his craft and it is his sorrow that commercialism has sullied to such an extent an art which, in the words of Pius XI, "with its unguificent power, can and must be a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good". A well-known art-director, a man who has been making films for nearly thirty years was my host some time ago in the restaurant of one of the big British studios. He astonished me by saying that, of the two hundred or more people dining in that room, not more than half a dozen really knew or cared much about film. If that was true, and I have no reason to doubt my host's complete sincerity, it gives point to much that Buchanan says in this book and elsewhere. To quote again: "Since this book first appeared, film has outgrown its strength. It looks fairly robust from a distance, but suffers rather a lot with internal troubles. Wardour Street specialists have had it under observation for some time, hoping a major operation may be averted, but some of us think that the major operation should be performed on the specialists, leaving the patient free to get up and regain its strength unaided."

May I recommend this book to all those who have, so far, failed to see the significance of film as the most potent influence of our time? In this way they may learn how to do something to "promote good motion pictures", the key directive in the Papal Encyclical.

J. A. V. B.

* "Film-making From Script to Screen." Phoenix House, Ltd. 8/6.

Cover Personality

Janette Scott

Film children are not always attractive types. The very nature of their employment militates against that natural charm which is one of childhood's sweetest enchantments. One can think of many youngsters whose unamiable qualities penetrate through the screen to make us thankful that we do not have to deal with them in real life!

However, there are also some very likeable children working for the screen and usually they are to be found among the professional families. Little Janette Scott, for example, is the daughter of that fine character

actress Thora Hird, and she has been brought up to the smell of the stage and screen, so to say.

Janette first came to our notice for her excellent work in *No Place For Jennifer*, where her heartrending performance as the child whose parents were divorced did much to lift that film out of the rut which its story and treatment otherwise merited. She has recently been seen in *The Galloping Major*, a delightful comedy in the Ealing Studio style in which Janette plays the young daughter to Basil Radford.

She has a part in the Festival of Britain film, *The Magic Box*, the story of Freize-Greene, the inventor of moving pictures.

Janette came to the Y.C.W. Premiere of the *Sorcier du Ciel* film last October. She is a pleasant and unaffected little girl off screen and with her mother's wise professional and maternal skill to guide her she should make a place for herself among the few child players who have matured into accomplished grown-up artists.

JOHN VINCENT.

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(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

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No. 9

Film Controversy

Recently I was forced into a controversy about films, with a man who is interested in the arts and who would describe himself as a good Christian. He has a poor opinion of the cinema as a medium of expressing ideas, particularly religious ideas.

He churned up the old heresy about the cinema being a mechanical device which materially minded magnets use to get rich quickly by exploiting the emotions of the masses.

He thinks that the Church should mind its own business and allow the cinema enough rope to hang itself. He seems to have a special grudge against films with religious themes and told me that he feels less embarrassed when he sees a naughty film than when he sees a religious film. He would not even concede a point to *Monsieur Vincent* and that splendid film, *Triptych*.

When I asked him whether he was embarrassed by the religious themes expressed by Raphael, Michelangelo, Mozart and other famous artists in other mediums he paused and said: "Er . . . no . . . but, that's different". He made the point that a painter like Raphael had the power to spiritualise his subjects to such a degree that we are able to accept them as real and derive inspiration from them; whereas a film such as *Monsieur Vincent* lacks integrity because no man who has not experienced sanctity can portray it. He said that such films disturb rather than inspire.

To allow six of the arts the right to express religious ideas and to deny this right to the seventh and the youngest of the arts, which is the cinema, is illogical and not very helpful. All young things, whether they are plants or people, must grow slowly, silently and imperceptibly.

The cinema is still in its youth. Who can say what spiritual masterpieces it will produce when it grows to maturity?.

EDITOR.

ROBERT FLAHERTY

By . . . MARYVONNE BUTCHER

By the death of Robert Flaherty at the age of sixty-seven the cinema has suffered a grave loss indeed. On many planes his was an influence that can ill be spared, and perhaps not least on account of that fertility of genius which at sixty gave us what is possibly his best film, showing no decline in any power and a positive advance in subtlety of theme. The parallel with Dr. Vaughan Williams is too striking to be missed: if *The Louisiana Story* was Flaherty's fifth symphony, how can we reconcile ourselves to the loss of that sixth which we shall now never know?

I defy anyone to see a Flaherty film and remain unmoved: about his best work there is a quality of lyricism, of limpidity, that has the immediate impact of a poem and that leaves the same feeling of serenity and inevitability behind. To have achieved this extreme authority of treatment combined with extreme mastery over medium so early, and to have preserved it inviolate so long proves Flaherty to have had a sense of purpose and a tenacity very unusual in the film-world; and though it may be argued that his personal predilections have perhaps deliberately narrowed his range to subjects which made this single-mindedness more easy, this still does not explain away the achievement. "I'm primarily an explorer," Robert Flaherty once said, "and only incidentally a movie-maker," and it may well be that the indifference generated by this point of view towards the common tools and tricks of the trade is what gives to all Flaherty's work that effortless visual beauty which is perhaps its dominant characteristic.

It is impossible fully to understand Flaherty's attitude to his subjects or his method of film-making without some knowledge of the details of his early environment and experiences,

which are highly relevant to his subsequent career: it is sufficiently rare in the history of the cinema to find a man whose course has run so logically from start to finish. He was born in 1884, in Iron Mountain, in the upper Michigan Peninsula; his father was Robert Henry Flaherty, a mining engineer from that part of the country with all the lack of respect for permanence which is the mark of the true mining man. Young Robert was sent to school at the age of six, but it was not a prospect which appealed to him very much, and on the whole he tended to go when it suited him and when there to behave with a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm.

In 1896 his father was made the manager of the Golden Star Mine in the Rainy Lake region of Canada, and he decided to take his eldest son along with him; it was generally agreed that it made very little difference whether he were at school or not and the township of some two thousand people to which he was going certainly afforded an interesting alternative. It must have been very like an early Western: gambling, shooting and knifing were accepted pastimes, and the female company available was of a generous and full-blooded kind. Robert was left to amuse himself, which he did with the greatest of ease, largely in the company of young Chippewa Indians, who inoculated him for the first time, but permanently as it subsequently appeared, with that love of simple and primitive communities which never left him to the end.

After two years of this racy existence Robert's father went on to another mine in the even more romantically named Lake of the Woods country, where they lived much the same kind of life. It was then suddenly decided to send him to Upper Canada College, Toronto, to finish his education; this



ROBERT FLAHERTY

is a school run very much on English public school lines, so that the reciprocal relationship of college and pupil was hardly likely to be happy. It was not, however, an episode that lasted very long, and he moved on to the Michigan College of Mines with an idea that he should follow in his father's profession; this, too, proved to be an uneasy interlude, and after some months his father made it clear that he must now fend for himself. So this, until he was nineteen, he quite successfully did, working on various mines; his father then became a prospector to the United States Steel Corporation with all Canada for his area. Robert joined him in his work and travels, then branched off with another man and finally, when he was twenty-one, took a job on his own as prospector for the Grand Trunk Railway.

In this and subsequent jobs he explored, unsystematically perhaps, but remarkably thoroughly, all over Canada from coast to coast: and one

must remember that at this time, while still a very young man, he had literally half a life-time's experience of living in the wilderness with the most primitive of peoples and in the hardest conditions.

On one of his periodic returns to Toronto he happened to meet Sir William Mackenzie, who was at that time building the North Canadian Railroad, and mentioned that, well though he knew Canada, he had never been to Hudson's Bay. Without more ado, Sir William sent him off on an assignment to prospect for iron and codfish in that area; he had a year of incredible dangers and difficulties, more than alleviated by his first meeting with Eskimos, but came down to Toronto with no news of fish or metal—only talk of a great land mass which had never been properly mapped. He was soon sent back again to get more information about this, returning briefly to Toronto to be married to Frances Hubbard and, almost casually,

to buy a movie-camera; then back north again to find and eventually to map the islands, one of which is officially named Flaherty Island in recognition of his work.

It was some six years since he had first gone north: he was now an experienced prospector and explorer of thirty-two, but it had taken all his resource and toughness to come back with his life, some specimens of indifferent iron-ore and several thousand feet of film from this expedition. After weeks of work on what he would subsequently have called "editing" his film, he accidentally set fire to it with a match, the whole thing went up in flames and he was badly burned. And in more ways than one, for his immediate reaction was to resolve to go back again as soon as possible and make the film of a lifetime about the North.

1920 saw the meeting between Flaherty and Captain Thierry Mallett, a representative of Revillon Frères, the great furriers, which led directly to the making of *Nanook of the North*. Mallett was immediately interested in the idea of a film about Eskimos as a commercial asset in the competition between his firm and the Hudson Bay Company, and readily agreed to send Flaherty north to the Barrens again, with all the equipment he needed. This time he knew exactly what he meant to do and this certainty of attack remained a constant in all his work from *Nanook* to *Louisiana Story* and it stems directly from those early formative years. To live with the people on their own terms, to observe their lives without condescension, to make a faithful record of everything that happens in the community life over a long period of time, and then to edit the bulk film with the greatest austerity, so that the final result, the emotion recollected in tranquillity, is eloquent both of the economy of ultimate selection and the significance of the poet's single eye. It is not a cheap, nor a facile method of making documentary films, as Eisenstein later found to his cost, but in the hands of a master it has yet to be improved upon.

This, then, was how *Nanook of the North* grew: for sixteen long months he lived and hunted and starved and nearly died with the Eskimos, filming a record with the utmost fidelity of the rigorous hardships which were the lot

of all. Then he came south to New York, never again to return to the North where he had spent so many years. He settled down to the task of editing, and showed the result to Revillon Frères who, to their eternal credit, recognised it as a masterpiece and have, moreover, always regarded it as a major financial asset; Hollywood, on the other hand, held neither opinion. Appalled at a piece of work which they considered at once bad film and bad box-office, the film barons would not even arrange for a showing and this was secured at the Roxy, New York, by little less than a trick. Here it did average business for the week, but was acclaimed by the critics at once and was something like a sensation when it reached Paris and London. In England, particularly, it had an immediate and fertile effect on the makers of what we have sequently learned to call "documentary", which is, I suppose, the field in which British film-makers have shown most originality and reached their highest achievements. John Grierson, for one, was able to see for the first time on the screen his own precept that this kind of film should "be the creative treatment of actuality".

Reassured by the clamour of the critics' applause, Hollywood began to reconsider its first instinctive response to this ugly duckling of their industry; Paramount came forward with an offer to Flaherty to go anywhere and do anything, filming what he liked. New to this kind of thing, Flaherty believed that this meant that he was indeed expected to make the kind of film he considered right. So, after a certain amount of discussion and reflection, he decided to go to Samoa and make a film about the life of the islands, which he intended to approach in the same way as with *Nanook*. With his wife and three daughters he spent nearly two years in Samoa, making a film that he called *Moana of the South Seas*. Partly as a concession to what even he had gathered of Paramount, but largely because it was in fact an integral side of island life, this film did carry a definite love-interest; but the central and dominant theme was a loving and faithful study of initiation into manhood by the ordeal of pain—in this case of tattooing. At the end of two years he was ready to edit the vast quantities of film and had, with his

family, been sent off from the island with every evidence of sorrow by the islanders who had learned to regard them as permanent members of the community. As could have been foreseen, of course, Paramount were considerably disconcerted by the result: this gravely beautiful ethnographical study of primitive customs was not at all the brand of island glamour they had anticipated. Endless difficulties were made over the release and eventually *Moana* became, as with so many Flaherty films on release, an artistic success acclaimed by all discerning critics and a pronounced financial failure.

After *Moana* Flaherty was rather at a loose end. It seemed obvious that his professional future now lay in films rather than in exploration, yet he was not connected with any major film enterprise. He did some desultory work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, making experimental shorts, and there were some abortive plans to make a film of *Kim*, which fell through for financial reasons; he was then asked to make a documentary of New York for an anonymous sponsor, and rather indulged himself on angle shots, and an emphasis on the more sordidly picturesque corners of the city. But this turned out not to be what the patron had expected, and even the negative has now disappeared. It seems obvious that to be a backer of Flaherty required rather specialised characteristics, and his next employers, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, conspicuously lacked them. He was given a contract to film *White Shadows in the South Seas* in Tahiti, and this time was accompanied by a full-scale Hollywood production unit. A child could have foreseen the difficulties that would arise, and after a briefish interim during which it appeared that two totally incompatible productions were afoot—Flaherty's and that of the unit as a whole—he tore up his contract and walked out.

It was now 1927 and Flaherty was over forty, without a job or even the prospect of one, but with an unshakable conviction that his way of making films and, still more importantly, his approach to the making of films was the only one. He is quoted as having said once that it was only the first sixty years of his

life that were tough: only a very integrated and devoted man could have conserved his sense of vocation against the constant reiteration of lesser men that he was utterly mistaken. At about this time he met Frederick Murnau, a man after his own heart, and they decided to go back to Tahiti and make the film that Flaherty had wanted to make before. They arrived at Papeete in July 1929 to start work on a film to be called *Tabu*, which was to treat of the life of a girl placed beyond all human relationships by the operation of a tabu; but when they returned from work on location in November of that same year they learned of the financial crash, in that era of crashes, of their Hollywood backers. Undaunted, they decided to proceed as best they could on Murnau's money, and finished the film in about eighteen months, which was quick for Flaherty: edited it on the spot, and brought it back to America where it was eventually released by Paramount. People who have seen *Tabu*, like that diminishing band who saw Nijinski dance, aver that there has seldom been anything like it, and that its sheer visual beauty was incomparable. But few enough saw it, and it was one of his worst failures.

Be that as it may, there is no denying the almost breathtaking beauty of Flaherty's next big film, *Man of Aran*, made between 1932-33 in Britain for Gaumont British. He was given the assignment through the influence of John Grierson, who from the very beginning had been one of his most devoted adherents, and few men can have regretted their intervention less. *Man of Aran* is essentially a film in the main stream of Flaherty development: it treats of the conflict of the primitive community with one of the great impersonal forces in its struggle for existence—in this case of the sea—and Flaherty approached the Aran islanders in the same way as he had the subjects of all his films. First, to settle down in the island; then to get to know the people on their own terms; then the endless preliminary studies of all sides of their life; and gradually the slow crystallisation of the main theme and the characters committed to it. The beauty, the purity and the serenity of the photography make it an unforgettable piece of work, and the flamboyance of the characters was

emphasised by the starkness of the setting. For many years it was considered Flaherty's best film, and it was certainly his first commercial as well as artistic success; it is gratifying to think that Britain enabled him to produce this lovely thing with few of the attendant vexations which had so often dogged his footsteps.

Hardly so much can be said of *Elephant Boy*, his next film made for Alexander Korda in 1935-7. Lovers of *Trimling* do not find it easy to recognise *Toomai of the Elephants* under the elaborate trappings which muffle the story, and it is almost as difficult to trace the Flaherty touch in the direction, though the sequences of the elephant drive could not have been made by anyone else. The results of this film must have been much less puzzling to Hollywood. It established its hitherto unknown star, Sabu; it was tepidly received by the critics, and it was a financial success; the film trade must have felt it had Flaherty under control at last.

Soon after Munich Flaherty went back to America with his family, and just after the outbreak of war he made a long documentary called *The Land*, for the Department of Agriculture. It was never used for the purpose for which it was commissioned, and few people have ever seen it. It is reputed to have been a study, in the most powerful terms, of land erosion in America, and is interesting as having for its central theme not the struggle of man against the forces of nature or tradition, but man and his struggle with the machine. Now here again we in Britain may modestly congratulate ourselves for in 1932 Grierson and Flaherty had made a short for the Empire Marketing Board called *Industrial Britain*, which was the first time that Flaherty had ever touched on this theme of mechanisation. *The Land*, which must have been considerably longer, was an amplification of this idea; and in his last and most brilliantly successful film, *The Louisiana Story*, Flaherty turned wholly to a fusion of his two dominating ideas—that of man in his weakness facing the power of nature, and man in his weakness facing the power of the machine. In essentials both are, of course, studies of the problem of survival, physical or psychological: in

The Louisiana Story these two struggles are superimposed. It is pleasant to think that Britain was the scene of his first tentative essay in the second manner.

The Louisiana Story, like *Nanook of the North*, was made for private backers: in this case for the Standard Oil Company. This form of sponsorship seems always to have given Flaherty more ease of execution, and here he was allowed a perfectly free hand in both subject and treatment. The country and people of the bayous of Louisiana were perfect material for his rhythmic, poetic direction and the force of his personality had never been more clearly stamped on any of his productions; not only is it the work of a master filmmaker, it is also essentially the work of a strongly individual thinker—a cerebral statement, as it were, and not merely the illustration of a technique. The Russians may say they owe much to Flaherty, but it is of Russian films that one is reminded by *The Louisiana Story*: the sunflowers of *The General Line* echoed by the water flowers of the later picture. Unlike too many of Flaherty's films, this not only won awards in many countries, but was also an immediate box-office success. He was now well over sixty, and it had been a long wait for this dual recognition.

The value of Flaherty to the cinema can hardly be over-estimated. For thirty odd years he had been making pictures with an obstinate probity, a refusal to capitulate to the second-rate or to financial venality which in itself constituted a positive factor for health in the industry. Roger Manvell, writing of *Nanook*, says that it is one of those pictures "worth a hundred competent marvels", and that it is only through the more-than-average precursor film that the average cinema production ever achieves any major advances. Flaherty's techniques changed, his themes developed, but always behind everything he ever touched, even little functional shorts like *Industrial Britain*, there burned the integrating compassion, the single-minded intuition of the man himself, whose purpose it was to record life as he saw it, not to make money or achieve material success for himself or anyone else. His independent, underivative genius reminds one of Keats on the

genius of poetry which, he said, "must work out its own salvation in a man: it cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness itself". And so back to the conviction that the Flaherty picture gives such true delights on all levels, technical, intellectual and aesthetic,

precisely because the eye and mind behind its making is that of a poet rather than that of a technician. In the words of François Mauriac in another context, Flaherty spent himself "to give an apparent order to the disorder of life, to impose on it a significance which it is possible it does not possess".

Catholic Stage Guild

At a general meeting held at Charing Cross Hotel on July 29th, the Constitutions of the Catholic Stage Guild were presented and accepted subject to minor terminological modifications.

The acting Committee was voted into office until the Annual General Meeting, to be held in the spring. Of this Committee, Mr. Ted Kavanagh remains Chairman and Father J. O'Hear, Chaplain.

Meetings will be held monthly at Corpus Christ Church, Maiden Lane, London, W.C., at 5 p.m. each First Friday. The meetings will consist of Benediction followed by social intercourse. A Special General Meeting will be held on Sunday, October 21st,

at 3-30 p.m., at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, and afterwards at the Charing Cross Hotel.

The programme until the end of this year is, therefore, as follows:

Friday, September 7th, 5 p.m.

Friday, October 5th, 5 p.m.

Friday, November 2nd, 5 p.m.

Friday, December 7th, 5 p.m.

Film personnel are welcome as part of the Catholic Stage Guild whether they be clapper boys, directors, script-writer or film stars. This is a Catholic Guild and all who are professionally connected with the stage and allied arts should be members.

Practical Help for the C.F.I.

"Although television is hitting the cinema very hard, the latter is still far and away the most densely attended of all amusements and has a tremendous influence for good or evil. We should, therefore, be careful about the films we visit. That is why I urge you so strongly to buy *Focus* every month. There you will find an expert and unbiased review of all the major films and many of the minor ones. Sixpence a month is a very small premium to pay to be insured against wasting your money and time on a worthless film, or (what is far more important) on an immoral one. Furthermore, when a film is on the whole worth seeing, but has certain bad points, these points are emphasised so that you may avoid the great danger of being seduced by the

emotional atmosphere into unreflective acceptance of the bad with the good. I myself have preserved every copy of *Focus* from the first issue as *Catholic Film News* in 1940."

(FR. W. A. PRITCHARD in
*St. Gertrude's Parochial
Newsletter.*)

PUBLIC DEMAND

We have been asked by a number of readers to revert to our practice of giving a list of films reviewed with their evaluation. In future issues we shall do this.

The Westminster Passion Film

For several years the Passion Play presented at Westminster Cathedral Hall, by the Archdiocesan Youth Organisation has been an important part of the Lenten devotions of many London Catholics. The play has always been offered anonymously with the object of stimulating devotion to the Sacred Passion of Our Lord.

The play has now been made into a film. Again the anonymity which sheltered the play veils the film and we only know that the Companions of the Cross offer *Behold the Man* as an attempt to stir up, by means of the

screen, a devotional co-operation with the mind of Christ during the dolorous steps of His Passion

It is the special merit of this film that it does, precisely, induce in the beholder a sense of intimate participation in the Way of the Cross. This it achieves partly by the self-effacing sincerity of the players and partly by the happy decision to play the whole thing in mime. There are no lip movements to distract one's attention from the message being offered. The commentary, composed of a harmony of the four Gospel accounts



of the Passion, is spoken with calm and deliberate dignity without any attempt to do more than let the natural weight of the words drop into one's soul. The camera examines with unobtrusive analysis, those characters and groupings which have some special significance in the context of the setting.

What has been accomplished is something new in the use of film for religious purposes, something that is a cross between the normal, natural, flow of camera motion and the static tableaux of stage presentation. The camera is here used as an instrument in meditation. The result is something which lifts the mind without disturbing the senses with undue excitement.

The part of Our Lord is played by a priest with unassuming dignity and sincerity. The rest of the cast is filled with layfolk. The direction was in the

hands of a well-known German actor. The technicians at Twickenham Studios were, of course, professionals, but they paid the tribute of respectful admiration for the self-sacrificing spirit which brought the cast, often at considerable personal inconvenience, to pay this gratuitous offering in the cause of religious use of the cinema.

The film will be presented to the public towards the end of September. Versions in Italian and French already exist and it will be a comparatively simple matter to produce versions in other languages. Perhaps the most important thing which this film will have achieved is the international appeal of the film once again by means of the internationally-known words of the Gospels.

J. A. V. B.



THE EDITOR

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

It is more than a pity that all wishing to become film-makers, scenario writers and critics, cannot begin in a cutting room under the eye of an expert editor, for it is here, far removed from the stars and lights, that the roots of films are exposed and basic construction occurs. And yet quite a number of people reach the director's chair and even become producers with a minimum knowledge of film editing—a fact sometimes reflected in their work.

We have learnt how stories are filmed in countless isolated scenes out of story order, and how their corresponding sounds and/or dialogue are on tracks which, to start with, are separate from the visuals. All this material is sent to the cutting room in daily batches to unravel and assemble. It is viewed immediately to judge photographic and sound quality. There are always several takes of each scene, and the director and editor decide, during the first run through, which are the best to retain. Then each sequence (visuals and track) is roughly assembled and when all material has arrived, a "rough-cut" is put together, which is a first assembly of the complete production. (Incidentally, positive film is cut, joined, and cut again with ease and scissors. The ends of any two scenes to be joined are scraped free of emulsion and coated with amyl acetate and acetone, mixed. The ends are clamped for a few seconds, and the join is made.)

The editor works from a copy of the scenario supplemented by the continuity sheets which reach him with each batch of rushes. These sheets indicate where original scenario instructions have been changed during filming, and contain all essential information about the actual filming. As every scene is numbered at the beginning, the editor has no difficulty in identifying each one. All this is more or less routine work, and it is only after the "rough-cut" version has been viewed that his creative faculty comes into play. Assembling a film should not be confused with editing it. The first is methodical sorting, the

second, the work of an artist. The editor heightens drama by the positioning of scenes and of angles within scenes. He brings a film to life by shortening or sharpening scenes, by introducing close-ups or removing them—by creating moments of silence in the sound track. He chisels a film, bit by bit. He might move an entire sequence to another place. He eliminates long-winded entrances or exits. He knows just how much of a close-up should be seen. He knows, too, when a sequence goes beyond saturation point.

There is, perhaps, less scope in the dialogue film for creative editing because human speech governs the action, but in sequences composed mainly of mute scenes, or action on a broad scale accompanied by natural sounds rather than dialogue, he has a chance to shape and reshape his visuals, and he can then create a story or a sequence out of a number of scenes which, separately, bear no direct relation to each other. The Editor creates the relationship. He introduces symbolism. Maybe he will enlist the aid of Nature's varying moods to express the moods of men and women. He can create, say, the prelude to a storm by grouping unrelated visuals each of which may have been filmed at a different place—heavy clouds—cattle under trees—grass bending low—running feet—angry waves—swaying branches—big rain spots splashing on pavements—then the deluge.

Opportunities are endless. After a hard training in the cutting room, one can really say one knows how films are made. Without such training the journey is longer, and signposts are few. A famous critic once said to me she always felt uneasy sitting in armchairs viewing films when she had never toiled on production, nor sweated in a projection box.

Even if one cannot find one's way into a cutting room, one would be wise to place first things first, and to realise that in the assembling and editing of a film, one can learn most about this difficult art.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;

C, family audiences; D, particularly for children

THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT

Starring: Alec Guinness, Joan Greenwood, Cecil Parker. **Producer:** Alexander Mackendrick. **Distributors:** Ealing Studios. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** about 80 minutes.

Today, one is justified in saying: "It's a Guinness, therefore it's good." Alec Guinness (when he first tried to get on the stage, everyone told him: "You're wasting your time, you'll never be an actor") is one of those artists, who turn to gold everything they touch. In this film-satire he again displays his versatility, his brilliance, that artistic humility which enables him to lose himself and get into the skin of whatever personality he chooses to play.

This time he plays the idealistic scientist who is labouring for the good of mankind to create a fabric which will resist dirt and which will never wear out. Scientists are never known in their own factories; Guinness has to work furtively, without reward, without the adequate necessities of life; after many experiments, failures, explosions, misunderstandings, all of which are most humorously told in film language, he is triumphant. But it is a pyrrhic victory: instead of congratulations, rewards and emoluments he discovers that every man's fist is turned towards him. The capitalists hate him because his invention will prevent them from making more money. The proletariat hate him because his creation means that they will be out of employment. To crown all, just as he is about to be lynched by the masses who rend his

white shining garment, he realises that it is not everlasting!

Films that come from the Ealing Studios are in a class apart. This film has the wit, the wisdom, the humanity, the full-hearted humour, the subtle satire, the high entertainment value, the quality of distinguished production that distinguished its predecessors. Even the music is witty. As I write this review I cannot help chuckling when I remember the humorous noises, very much like some strains of modern music, which spring from the young idealistic scientist's test tubes.

This is a good story, fantastic but credible and developed with style and good pace; the characters are alive and lively, they are the sort of people you might meet any day in any textile factory, interesting to meet, to laugh at or to laugh with. Impish Joan Greenwood, with her quivery, quavery attractively husky voice; Cecil Parker, urbane, well-mannered and immaculately dressed; Ernest Thesiger, who celebrated his 72nd birthday while this film was in production; all the other major players play faultlessly.

The same may be said for the subsidiary characters, who stay just long enough to make you want to see more of them . . . Vida Hope who plays the trade unionist factory girl and who befriends Guinness; the old landlady (what a remarkable head and face she has!) who pathetically points out to Guinness that his invention has robbed her of her job of "taking in washing"; the little girl who misdirects the mob when it is after the blood of the man who has created a suit which will never get soiled and which will last forever. This film is physically and intellectually enjoyable. E.

THE SOUND OF FURY

Starring: Frank Lovejoy, Kathleen Ryan, Lloyd Bridges and Richard Carlson. **Director:** Cyril Enfield. A United Artists Picture. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 99 minutes approx.

I missed the Press Show of this film and went to see it when the cinema was filled with its customary audience, drawn, perhaps, by the sensational reviews which it received from the National Press. I was disturbed, therefore, by the ugly laughter which followed both the intentionally "humorous" episodes of the shy, would-be gangsters' moll, and some episodes which were, surely, not intended to provoke laughter. It seemed that a large part of the audience was, in fact, being sadistically stimulated by a film which was, ostensibly, preaching against sadism. Which makes one wonder. There was an article in a Sunday paper some weeks ago which, in a similar vein, spoke of the stimulation to sexual crime which publication of the details of such crimes brings about. Within a few days the thing which the newspaper was ostensibly deploring had taken place; which again makes one wonder.

The sound of fury is that of a mob, stimulated to demand the lynching of two men associated with a brutal murder by the publication of articles in the local paper calling for their execution and describing their crime. The police are overpowered by a frenzied mob and the journalist, ineffectually protesting his remorse, brushed aside when the two frantic prisoners are thrown to the mob like foxes to the hounds.

It is an ugly picture and one which cannot easily be forgotten. The preaching of a blind evangelist at the opening and close of the film and the pleading of an Italian scientist for sympathy and understanding for criminals make the film into a kind of propaganda for toleration and crime reform, but the reasons given ignore the fact of personal responsibility for wrong-doing and assume that sin is the result of the stimulation of the wrong glands.

The acting is remarkably good. Frank Lovejoy as the man weakly

tempted to crime and Lloyd Bridges as the anti-social gangster who entices him are excellent. Kathleen Ryan as the wife of Frank Lovejoy gives the best performance of her career.

The crowd scenes are extremely well done and the direction in general is outstanding. But I remain uneasy about this film. As in the case of *Ace in the Hole* one asks, "Is it true?" and secondly, "Is it necessary to make such films? Are they not, in the true sense, anti-American?"

V.

HELL IS SOLD OUT

Starring: Richard Attenborough, Mai Zetterling. **Herbert Lom,** **Hermione Baddeley** and **Kathleen Byron.** **Director:** Michael Anderson. **Distributors:** Eros Films. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

This film, which was not shown to the Press, is chiefly remarkable for the number of well-known players who manage for once to escape from type-casting. Hermione Baddeley is successful as an unscrupulous and socially ambitious publisher; Herbert Lom is an appealing and soft-hearted novelist who gets the girl in the end; Richard Attenborough is a gay, flirtatious pianist who gives up the girl he loves to the man he thinks she loves, etc., etc. Refreshing if only for the change of expressions and dialogue. The story is about a bachelor novelist who finds that his latest novel was written by his widow. She claims that, thinking he was dead, she had a right to his name in view of the fact that a previous MS. of hers had appeared under *his* name. The tangle is, of course, happily ended after a slightly tedious film has given us some pleasant moments.

Mai Zetterling is charming and competent as the soi-disant widow. Kathleen Byron, too, loses, for one film at least, her customary expression of loathing and makes an attractive "gold-digger". A film to while away a rainy evening. You will notice, of course, the prevailing fashion of amorality. Lying and deceit are all right if the end is "good". Wasn't it the Jesuits who invented this kind of thing?

V.

STRANGERS ON A TRAIN

Starring: Farley Granger, Ruth Roman, Robert Walker, with Leo G. Carroll, Patricia Hitchcock, Laura Elliott and Robert Gist. **Producer:** Jack L. Warner. **Director:** Alfred Hitchcock. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 105 minutes.

One can always rely on Alfred Hitchcock for an unusual story with a universal appeal. The story of the film starts with a proposed exchange of murders, suggested by Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) to Guy Haines (Farley Granger), a well-known tennis player, in a chance conversation aboard a Washington train. The film falls naturally into three parts, each with its climax and anti-climax. Each time, Hitchcock makes dramatic use of pronounced backgrounds to use the camera to build up the suspense. The murder of Miriam, Guy's wife, takes place in an amusement-park, the trailing of the girl by Bruno through the park being a perfectly balanced sequence of long and close-up shots, themselves balanced by the near and distant voices of the victim and her companions. The next climax and heightening of tension is when Guy, anxious to keep an appointment with the murderer at the park, is delayed in a long and bitter tennis match, while Bruno, in matching shots, is just as anxiously trying to reach down a drain into which the precious piece of evidence has fallen. The last climax is the fight between the two on the madly whirling merry-go-round.

The title of the film may suggest something similar to *The Lady Vanishes*. Apart from the story, there are many similarities, especially Hitchcock's skill in introducing humorous relief to offset the growing suspense. In the fight on the roundabout, with the police holding back the demented mother, the only one enjoying the experience is the young boy astride the bobbing-horse. Again, the murderer's presence at Forest Hills is recognised as the only head not moving sideways from left to right as the spectators follow the passage of the ball. Hitchcock has a good story to tell and he tells it well,

but he knows the cinema public and is content to give everyone something for their money.

The cast is uniformly good and acts throughout as a team. Robert Walker gives an outstanding performance as the maniac murderer, Farley Granger gives a satisfactory account of himself as the half-guilty accessory, anxious not to involve the Morton family, whose daughter Anne he is now free to marry. Anne Morton (Ruth Roman) is a pleasing personality, while among the supporting players Patricia Hitchcock, as Anne's sister, in an excellent performance, prevents the anti-climaxes of the film from becoming boring.

The moral, I suppose, is that one's own matrimonial troubles are one's own affairs and there is no short-cut out of them, but as far as Alfred Hitchcock is concerned, the story is the thing.

O.

DEAR BRAT

Starring: Mona Freeman, Billy De Wolfe, Edward Arnold, Lyle Bettger. **Producer:** Mel Epstein. **Director:** William A. Seiter. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 82 minutes.

For some time now Hollywood has been tumbling to the possibilities of exploiting the suburban homes of the upper middle classes. One fears that there may be hidden depths of criminal and psychological misery as yet unrevealed, but in the meantime it is all very good fun. The dear brat in this case is the daughter of Senator Wilkins, who feels called to the rescue of anti-social types who have paid their debt to society but still must set about what is called for short rehabilitation, re-integration or readjustment. Just to make things complicated the dear brat invites a man of desperate record, who was sentenced by her own father, into the home in the capacity of gardener. From then on things move rapidly from crisis to crisis, reaching in the end, we are glad to say, a temporary solution. The senator is far too progressive a man to resort to old-fashioned spanking methods, but he and others like him would put themselves in the clear socially and politically much quicker if they would. Almost everybody will enjoy this.

J. C.

HERE COMES THE GROOM

Starring: Bing Crosby, Jane Wyman, Alexis Smith, Franchot Tone, James Barton, with Robert Keith.
Producer and Director: Frank Capra. **Distributors:** Paramount.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 110 minutes.

When I saw the advertised running time of 144 minutes, I at once thought that a comedy needs to be very exceptional if it is to be so long. And though this picture has received some guarded praise from responsible people, it is not all that good. However, the actual time by my watch was 110 minutes.

The dialogue of a film sometimes does some of my reviewing for me. It would not be fair to quote in this connection: "This calls for an exposé." But, "He thinks he can sing" and "You know my limited range", seemed very applicable to Bing Crosby.

Young Anna Maria Alberghetti is introduced—or should one say dragged into the story?—in order to sing an operatic number with precocious skill. Mr. Crosby, as before, melodiously imbues the young with simple and sound philosophy.

What I found uncongenial about the film was less its self-conscious frolicsomeness than a certain hardness and cheapness of tone. And I wonder to what extent those who produce pictures of women fighting one another realise the level to which they are approximating.

It was interesting to see Jane Wyman as a "brittle" young woman, in contrast to her part in *The Glass Menagerie*. And it was amusing to see Alexis Smith as a "socialite" being de-refined. Oddly enough, an outstanding memory is of a very small incident when an irritable man got his dental plate broken. The actor's name eludes me, though I have often seen him before. But such small part players are specialists worthy of comparison with first-rate accompanists or anaesthetists; they get no publicity and are obscured by the principals whom they assist, but they have brought their own essential work to a fine art.

Q.

NO RESTING PLACE

Starring: Michael Gough, Eithne Dunne, Noel Purcell. **Producer and Director:** Paul Rotha.
Distributors: A.B.F.D.
Certificate: A. **Category:** A.
Running time: 75 minutes.

We hear so much about the advantage which Italy and France have in making films like *Bicycle Thieves* and *Jofroi* and we have swallowed so easily the assertion that such methods are impossible in these islands that it comes as something of a shock to see a film which was made entirely on location in Ireland; which cost (according to current Wardour Street standards) comparatively little; which is, moreover, comparable with the best that either of the two countries above mentioned have produced in the same style.

The film is the first fictional effort of Paul Rotha, a name hitherto associated with the development of documentary in this country. The documentary flavour, naturally, persists. This is no bad thing for it lends an air of veracity to scenes which, in the studio, would have seemed melodramatic.

The story is a simple one built up on the feud which exists between ordinary people and tinkers in Ireland. In this case, a tinker hides the body of a gamekeeper whom he has killed while defending his wife and child because he is convinced that the police would never give him justice. The police, in the person of a fanatical constable, at length run him to earth after a relentless persecution. The tinker is not an attractive type, nor is the policeman, yet our sympathies are somehow engaged for both.

The acting of Michael Gough as the tinker is astonishingly good, taking into consideration that he is a London stage actor who has to convince us, as he does, that he is an illiterate and thickly-spoken Irishman. Noel Purcell gives the best performance of his career as the policeman. Hitherto he has been typed in stage-Irish parts; here he shows what he can do to build up and sustain a complete character. Eithne Dunne, too, as the tinker's wife is true to character and eschews any kind of glamourising make-up, with obvious benefit to her playing.

The remainder of the cast, mostly amateur, are very good and the camera work outstandingly good. The danger with such a film is that one's enthusiasm at what has been achieved within narrow limits causes one to overlook faults, of which there are several; an unnecessarily slow pace, a lack of real humour, which would not have destroyed the drama. But the merits are many and the general effect so pleasing that it is worth while taking trouble to see this unusual film, a proof that we can take our cameras into the open air with as much confidence as the Continentals—when we have the right people in charge of the cameras.

V.

AS YOUNG AS YOU FEEL

Starring: Monty Woolley, Thelma Ritter, David Wayne, Jean Peters. **Producer:** Lamar Trotti. **Director:** Harmon Jones. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 77 minutes.

It is obvious that America is worried about the incidence of divorce. This enjoyable film contains what is for Hollywood some propaganda about the permanence of matrimony of a fairly subtle type and manages also to say a word for the individualist. Nevertheless it is most enjoyable and very capably acted. Honours go to Monty Woolley and Thelma Ritter, but the general level is very high. The plot is slight but full of good comedy and no little friendly satire aimed at American big business. Over-organisation is something, apparently, that the American citizen has difficulty in restraining, and when Grandfather Hodges (Monty Woolley) finds himself declared redundant by some obscure corporation that has grown unmindful of the Gettysburg declaration, things begin to happen. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of the film is the light thrown on ordinary American family life and character. It is here that Thelma Ritter comes into her own in her unique way. There could be few happier entertainments to take the family to when depression has fallen upon it.

J. C.

NO HIGHWAY

Starring: James Stewart, Marlene Dietrich, Glynis Johns, Jack Hawkins, with Janette Scott and Ronald Squires. **Director:** Henry Koster. A Twentieth Century-Fox Film (British). **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 99 minutes.

In a week that includes a Hitchcock thriller it is an outstanding film that can be ranked more entertaining and suspenseful. Yet without any of the tricks of editing which enable even second-rate films to assume an importance they do not merit, *No Highway* emerges on the score of script, acting and direction as one of the most gripping films we have seen for a long time. The peak of tension is reached when, in a transatlantic plane, Theodore Honey, the boffin, discovers that it is one of those which his researches tell him will disintegrate after 1400 hours flying time. The plane has done nearly 1400 hours. He warns the Captain to turn back. The Captain refuses. He tells a famous film-actress, a passenger and the favourite star of his dead wife that there is one spot in the plane which might prove less vulnerable when the crash comes. He warns the air-hostess, who has been kind to him, where to sit to take advantage of the thousand to one chance of escape. They think him a lunatic, or do they? Certainly I have not had such an "edge of the seat" fifteen minutes in any film since *Twelve Days to Noon*. And it is all quite credible. That is the beauty of the film. You feel it could have happened. That is, with the exception of the end of the story which is a sentimental concession to romance, though not unpleasant of its kind.

James Stewart puts all he knows of the tricks of shyness, gaucherie, helplessness and general air of guileless fool into his study of the scientist, Honey. It is a complete characterisation and probably the best thing Stewart has done for a long time. Marlene Dietrich comes to life in an extraordinary way as the film actress, and one has the impression she is being almost autobiographical when she speaks of

herself and her work, within measurable distance of eternity. "All that will be left of me will be a few strips of celluloid in a can!" And a profound point for meditation when the plane continues in flight: "A few more minutes presented to us as a gift!"

With such competition it says much for Glynis Johns that she more than holds her own as the air hostess. She is delightfully right in her part. Janette Scott, too, as Honey's over-precocious daughter, is not ill at ease in such company. A special word of praise, too, to Nial McGuinness as the Captain. In a variety of character parts he can always be relied on and this is one of his best. Indeed, not the least merit of the film is its faultless casting. And Neville Chute, who wrote the book, must be fairly happy too. Definitely a film to see.

V.

WORM'S EYE VIEW

Starring: Ronald Shiner and Garry Marsh, with Diana Dors, John Blythe, Bruce Seton and Christina Forrest. **Director:** Jack Raymond. **Distributors:** A.B.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 75 minutes.

There is no accounting for taste as far as some London stage successes are concerned. R. F. Delderfield's *Worm's Eye View* ran for several years after a wobbly opening had been laced with street amplification which brought the crowds rolling in to the Whitehall Theatre. Now it is turned into a film and it is still difficult to know why it should have appealed to the public for so long. Perhaps it is that to many ex-service men and women there is a nostalgic quality about the types and situations met with in this yarn about R.A.F. personnel billeted upon a dragon of a landlady whose house is euphemistically called "Mon Repos". All the clichés and gags you expect when a Cockney spiv and a Welsh miner join the philandering "Duke", the idealistic young schoolmaster Mark and the kindly, middle-aged, "other war", L.A.C. Brownlow, are here in obvious plenty. The crowded Rialto rocked with noisy laughter when I

attended a non-Press showing so I suppose that there is every chance of the film repeating the stage endurance test.

V.

RICH, YOUNG AND PRETTY

Starring: Jane Powell, Danielle Darrieux, Wendell Corey, Vic Damon and Fernando Lamas. **Director:** Norman Taurog. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 95 minutes.

A technicolor trifle which tells in easy terms the story of a Texas rancher who takes his daughter to Paris, where she falls in love with a French Government clerk, and discovers her mother, a French singer, who ran away from her husband and child soon after the birth of the latter. Naturally, the father and mother are reunited and also naturally the young people are allowed their romance after a proper ration of opposition.

The whole thing is light entertainment with the accent on youth and music. Even Wendell Corey, as the father, looks half his age with a Colman moustache, and Vic Damon, a pleasant-looking young man, is an agreeable foil to a charming Jane Powell. As her mother, Danielle Darrieux, looks just a shade *passée*. Perhaps it was the Hollywood sun.

V.

THE PHANTOM HORSEMAN

Starring: Bill Edwards, Maria Hart, Spade Cooley. A Jack Schwarz Production. Monarch Film. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 60 minutes.

The good old Wild West. There is plenty of galloping in this film, which deals with the rustling and smuggling of a gang who are headed by a man known as the Phantom Horseman. The story is as old as films, and older. But it is always fun to see this sort of thing, and far more healthy than the sob-sex-slush so often dished up for us.

M.

TALK OF A MILLION

Starring: Jack Warner and Barbara Mullen, with Michael Dolan, Noel Purcell, Niall McGinnis, Ronan O'Casey, Joan Kenny and Elizabeth Erskine. **Director:** John Paddy Carstairs. **Distributors:** A. B. Pathé. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

A play called "They Got What They Wanted", by Louis Dalton, was a failure when put on in London last autumn. It has been turned into a film and sent out without a Press showing. A pity, for a poor play has expanded into an amusing and enjoyable film which deserves to be a success, if only because it has youth and light and air and is such a welcome change from the grim, underlighted, existentialist pre-occupations which are so often served up as film entertainment nowadays. Jack Warner, Barbara Mullen, Michael Dolan and Noel Purcell give competent performances based on their long experience, and some charming youngsters show promise of future skill if only the film world is kind to them. Vincent Ball, Ronan O'Casey, Elizabeth Erskine and Joan Kenny are names to keep in mind.

The story is best summed up by saying that it concerns an Irish family whose work-shy father eventually puts them in comfortable circumstances by taking advantage of a rumour that he is to inherit a large fortune and working on the axiom that whereas £500 is "finance", 1s. 6d. is money!

V.

THE LAST OUTPOST

Starring: Ronald Reagan and Rhona Fleming. **Director:** Lewis B. Foster. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 80 minutes.

This is the age of rehabilitation. The cinema, too, follows the fashion. All our good old friends, the Bad Men, the Indians, the Japs, the Philanderers, the Gangsters, are now being shown to

have hearts of gold and a weakness for humanity. This is the third film I have recently seen in which White Americans make a poor showing against the honest, true-hearted braves. To complicate matters still further, the Confederates and Yankees get mixed up with the story and it has to end with the Confederates rescuing the Yankees from the Indians who have been betrayed by the Washington Government! Awkward! I wonder whether this should be listed among the un-American films?

There are some beautiful shots of horsemen, both white and red, and the battle scenes are picturesque if not convincing. As the whole is doled out in glorious technicolor, it is probably worth your 1s. 9d.—or is it now 1s. 10d.?

V.

LOVE HAPPY

Starring: The Marx Brothers, with Vera Ellen, Ilona Massey, Marion Hutton and Melville Cooper. **Director:** David Miller. **Distributors:** Monarch Film Corporation. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 80 minutes approx.

There is a curious streak of sadism to be found in many of the films which feature clowns. Chaplin's are not without this element. He, also, is noteworthy for a basic vulgarity in many of the situations intended to draw laughter at the expense of somebody's embarrassment. This characteristic is found in the Marx Brothers films, too. *Love Happy* has some quite horrid sequences concerning torture which, though presented as funny, are in fact rather revolting.

With the Marx Brothers the story never matters much. This one is about the stealing of the Romanoff diamonds. Groucho is once again a detective; Harpo and Chico are members of a troupe who need a backer to break in on Broadway. The best moments are when Harpo is gathering food, by strictly dishonourable methods, for the starving show girls. As always, the film is too long. Humour and slapstick are tolerable only in small doses.

V.

LIFE IN HER HANDS

Starring: Kathleen Byron and Bernadette O'Farrell. **Director:** Philip Leacock. A Crown Film Unit Production. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 50 minutes.

Like *Out of True*, which dealt with treatment in insane asylums, this film, made by the Crown Film Unit, has a purpose behind its factual-fictional story of a young widow who finds in nursing the solution to her thwarted maternal instincts and also to her scrupulous fixation that she was in some way the cause of her husband's death in a car smash.

The film is competently and pleasingly made and the hospital staff convincingly represented, even though one does feel that matrons are not usually so youthful nor Paul Dupuis the most likely type for a lecturer on psychology.

Kathleen Byron is excellent as the widow and Bernadette O'Farrell entertaining as an unruly probationer. A film which should do much to make girls think of both the joy and the need of ministering to the sick.

V.

WHEREVER SHE GOES

Starring: Suzanne Parrett and Eileen Joyce. **Director:** Michael Gordon. **Distributors:** A. B. Pathe. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 80 minutes.

This is a charmingly simple story based on the early days of Eileen Joyce, the famous Australian pianist. Filmed in Tasmania and the goldfields of Western Australia, it both pleases the eye with its glorious light and scenery and stimulates the imagination with visions of future films produced in a land which is second to none for natural background and exciting stories of the kind that are so often thought to be peculiar to the U.S.A.

Michael Gordon, a young British cineaste, who wrote, produced and directed *Wherever She Goes*, is obviously a man with a poetic gift for film-making. His handling of the scenery as well as his direction of little Suzanne Parrett, indicate that he believes in film as an art.

The naïve treatment of Eileen Joyce's early struggles to express the musical powers within her and the somewhat amateurish acting of some of the adults do not destroy the essentially entertaining character of this decent, kindly, open-air and moving film. It also has the merit of sticking to what it is trying to say and does not ramble beyond the probable.

Suzanne Parrett as young Eileen is delightful. A natural actress, graceful and convincing, she carries the film on firm young shoulders. Eileen Joyce herself is seen in prologue and epilogue and her music is heard as background to most of the visuals. A wholly pleasant and worthwhile film.

V.

CHICAGO MASQUERADE

Starring: Mark Stevens, Rhonda Fleming, with Nancy Guild and Charles Drake. **Director:** Frederick de Cordova. A Universal-International Picture. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 81 minutes.

This unwholesome story of confidence tricksters operating at the famous Chicago World Fair is made even more so by the revolting publicity which accompanies it. Scantily-clothed dancers can be tolerated in proper contexts where the emphasis is on choreography. In this case the film builds up to a pornographical finale in which the suggestive dancing of Rhonda Fleming as a fake Egyptian princess is flaunted as a gesture in the cause of women's "freedom".

The publicity hand-out sets the tone. The provocatively posed picture of "Little Egypt" is entitled: "The Shape that Shook the World!" The inside of the picture informs us that, "Women called her shocking! Men called her as soon as they could get her 'phone number!" This is about the lowest such publicity has reached in London for a long time. I wonder what the Un-American Activities Committee has to say about this type of "propaganda"? People who have a regard for the cinema will know what to do about it.

V.

WHEN I GROW UP

Starring: Bobby Driscoll, Robert Preston, Martha Scott and Charley Grapewin. **Director:** Michael Kanin. **Distributors:** Eros Films. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 80 minutes.

Another film not shown to the Press; a sentimental but not unattractive story of a boy who, thinking his parents have no affection for him, takes it out on them by hooliganism and plans to run away. He finds and reads a diary written by his grandfather who, when a boy had the same kind of difficulty with his parents. The boy and his grandfather get together and reformation all round is the clue for the final fade out.

Bobby Driscoll, now reaching the deep-voiced period which means that his little boy parts are at an end, gives a likeable performance as the boy and also as the grandfather when a boy. The moral is a sound one; if only people would show some signs of affection for those they love, life might be easier.

V.

THE PRINCE WHO WAS A THIEF

Starring: Tony Curtis, Piper Laurie, Everett Sloane. Story of Theodore Dreiser. **Director:** Rudolph Maté. A Universal-International Picture. G.F.D. Release. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C. *Running time:* 88 minutes.

Entertainment such as this, in the Arabian Nights tradition, is always colourful and generally a good mixture of action and passion! In fact the passion side, in the sex-appeal sense, is not so stressed as the posters would lead us to think.

The story is of Julna (Tony Curtis), heir to the throne, who should have been assassinated as a baby, in process of developing into prince of thieves under the skilful tuition of his assassin-turned-father. "Set a thief to catch a

thief" is used by the usurper as a reason for setting Julna on the trail of the person who has stolen the great Pearl of Fatima.

In finding and restoring it, he falls in love with Yasmin, a beautiful princess. But the pearl thief, Tina (Piper Laurie), a female contortionist, happens to have fallen in love with Julna. In a series of exciting chases through markets, scaling of walls, sword battles, Julna and Tina are cornered in the Treasury, which they have previously robbed. Tina saves the day by announcing Julna as the true prince, and he banishes Yasmin and her father, marries Tina, and they live . . .

The film is well set and produced, with Tony Curtis as a handsome dashing young thief-prince. Piper Laurie is mischievously attractive, and the whole is in glorious technicolor . . . so what more could anyone want?

M.

RED MOUNTAIN

Starring: Alan Ladd, Elizabeth Scott, Arthur Kennedy, John Ireland. **Producer:** Hal Wallis. **Director:** William Dieterle. In Technicolor. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* B. *Running time:* 84 minutes.

It is difficult to ring the changes on the ever-popular stories of early days in the wild west. But this story of the end of Southern resistance in the face of the Union manages to avoid the worst repetitions, and centres a lot of action round Alan Ladd, who carries it off with his usual dash. The acting is all pretty straightforward, and the photography good. The bitterness of feeling between the two sides is difficult to recapture at this distance. The old question of Red Indians looks in for a moment, and the moral appears to be that the brutal methods used by the Indians is too much for the true white man to stand. And so the remaining Southerners are betrayed to the Union, and the sun sets on the stars and stripes.

A good evening's entertainment which holds nothing outstanding, either of good or bad.

M.

THE LAW AND THE LADY

Starring: Greer Garson, Michael Wilding, Fernando Lamas and Marjorie Main. **Director:** Edwin H. Knopf. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 100 minutes.

This screen-play seems to derive partly from Frederick Lonsdale's play *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*, which gives it its shape, and Hilaire Belloc's novel *The Green Emerald*, which gives it the idea of a house party in which every guest has some disreputable episode in his past to make him shrink from cross-examination in a law court. It is a furbished version in which a housemaid partners the ne'er-do-well brother of a peer in a round of confidence trickery in every European capital from which they are politely but firmly ejected, until San Francisco tempts them to jewel robbery on an elaborate scale.

The sheer satire of the piece enables an immoral story to get away with it on

the wings of witty dialogue and excellent acting. Greer Garson is back to her old, high standard and Michael Wilding was never better suited to his traditional rôle as the aristocratic crook-cum-butler. He is one example of an English screen player whose Hollywood pilgrimage has brought out the best in him.

V.

THE GOLDEN HORDE

Starring: Ann Blyth, David Farrar, George McReady. **Producers:** Howard Christie and Robert Arthur. **Director:** George Sherman. **Distributors:** G.-F.-D. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 76 minutes approx.

This is the sort of film that gives a handle to the fellow who likes to churn up the old falsehood that the cinema is nothing more than an industry directed by individuals who don't care



GREER GARSON . . . MICHAEL WILDING

a dime about art or any of its brethren.

The story is about a band of crusaders (Sir Guy of Devon, their leader, always calls them "lads") who journey to Samarkland with an ultimatum to the evil Gengis Khan to keep out of Europe.

Hollywood finds it difficult to keep love out of history and before long Sir Guy of Devon (David Farrar), looking so very knightly in sword and armour, is amorously engaged with Ann Blyth, who is the beautiful ruler, Princess Shalimar; she is dressed in not too maidenly a manner and looks like some blithe spirit that Shelley might have created.

Banal is the word that best describes this film. You could almost believe that it was produced just to give David Farrar an opportunity to make love to Ann Blyth.

A more apt title for this film might be "Armour and L'amour".

E.

HALF ANGEL

Starring: Loretta Young and Joseph Cotten, with Cecil Kellaway and Basil Ruysdael. **Director:** Richard Sale. A Twentieth Century-Fox Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 76 minutes.*

Technicolor underlines in glorious pastel shades of difference the split personality of Nora Gilpin who, at night time and in exotic shimmering green silk, seduces lawyer John Raymond, a young man whom by the light of day and dressed in sober brown she loathes. Marriage, at a moment's notice and in the middle of the night, solves her neurosis and leaves everybody, except the man she was engaged to, looking happily ever after.

Loretta Young is surprisingly youthful when the camera does not come too close to her colour make-up. She acts with unexpected grace in a film which is pleasant enough nonsense with one or two moral lapses which, as the characters are only Christian to the extent of using the name of God in a civil marriage service, is not unexpected. I mean the ease with which it is assumed that lying is legitimate to get one out of trouble. Incidentally, does anyone ever remember seeing a film star who said

any prayers before he (or she) got into bed? Curious, isn't it!

V.

CATTLE DRIVE

Starring: Joel McCrea, Dean Stockwell, with Chill Wills, Leon Ames and Bob Steele. **Director:** Kurt Neumann. A Universal-International Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: D. Running time: 77 minutes.*

A title like this tells you what the film is about and indeed, to the driving of cattle, reminiscent, at some points, of *Overlanders*, is added for full measure the idea behind *Captains Courageous*. The spoilt fourteen-year-old son of a railroad magnate is compelled to spend two weeks with a bunch of cowhands. He ends the fortnight a reformed character and the film fades out with the boy, his father and the chief cowhand riding off into the sunset.

This is a simple, kindly, naïve story and children as well as some grown-ups will like the technicolored scenes of stampeding cattle and runaway horses. Dean Stockwell, now a coltish lad of fourteen, maintains his ability to present a credible version of an incredible character, which means that he is an actor. He is much better than Freddy Bartholomew was in *Captains Courageous*, but Joel McCrea, as the equivalent character in *Cattle Drive* comes nowhere near the mastery of Spencer Tracy in the earlier film.

It is a gratifying relief to be able to put a film in the category for children.

V.

A Question of Address

Will those who have occasion to write to us at 157 Victoria Street please make sure to include *Catholic Film Institute* in the address.

C.F.I. Lectures

Lectures have been given at the Y.C.W. Summer School at Strawberry Hill, to the Catholic Guild of Professional Social Workers at Oxford, and to the Cinema Committee of the National Council of Women at Friends' Meeting House, N.I.

DOCUMENTARY

THE OFFERTORY

Religious Documentary and Film Strip. **Producer and Director:** Rev. G. L. Wheeler for the Church of England Northern Provincial Film Council. **Distributors:** S.P.C.K. *Running time:* 12 minutes. Film Strip: 30 frames.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Blackburn and a number of Church of England clergy were present at the first showing of this film. Prior to the film, the Bishop of Blackburn said that the use of film for religious purposes was not a stunt on the part of a few "progressive" clergy, but the considered and often painful use of a new medium for extending the Gospel. His Lordship regretted the slow output of religious films but pointed out that the heavy expense and the lack of funds were the cause of the scarcity of religious films. His Lordship said that *The Offertory* cost £1,400 and that it was the first of a series of similar films which, it was hoped, would eventually complete a film account of the Holy Communion Service and kindred subjects.

As a Catholic, one sympathises with and applauds the desire to use film for religious purposes. The theme of this film attempts to do for the Church of England Service what Alan Turner did for the Mass in *The Sacrifice We Offer*. I hope that it will not be regarded as partisan prejudice if I say that, in spite of the excellent photography and evident sincerity with which the film was undertaken, and notwithstanding the limitations imposed by the sub-standard medium in which Turner worked, *The Offertory* lacks the sense of inspiration and unity which permeated the Catholic film. This may be due to the variety of liturgical schools of practice which are brought into a short film, or possibly the sense, one had, that the film was searching for a common expression of belief in the reality of Christ's presence under the sacramental forms. Perhaps, also, there was an amateurish feel about the direction of the film which consoled uncomfortably with the professional camera-work.

V.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

L'INGENUE LIBERTINE

(No Love Lost)

Starring: Daniele Delorme, Frank Willard. **Director:** Jacqueline Aubry. **Distributors:** George Arnall. *Certificate:* X. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 80 minutes.

Though this film has been given an "X" Certificate, which means that it is considered suitable only for adults, it is evident that the censor has made some excisions. This does not mean that it is either truly adult, in the sense that it presents serious problems which only the mature could be expected to appreciate or that it is now divested of all unseemly episodes; indeed, the very points at which cuts have been made seem to suggest a licentiousness which probably did not exist in the original.

The story concerns an emotionally immature young wife who seeks from the company of other men the exotic raptures of which she imagines love to consist. She eventually discovers that love dwells at home and we are left with the presumption that henceforth her husband will provide all that is needed.

The basic assumption of the story is, of course, quite false, the atmosphere of the film completely materialistic and the acting and decor sufficiently artificial to leave us to suppose that the players, too, found it unconvincing.

V.

Catholic Film Exhibition

We hope that many priests and layfolk who have made practical use of the cine-camera will rally to the Conference which is being organised for them at Stratford-on-Avon during the first week of October.

Father T. S. Copsey, M.A., is making all arrangements for the participants to be comfortably housed at Soli House, Stratford-on-Avon, from October 1st to October 5th. The cost will be 15s. a day inclusive.

The available places are strictly limited so please make your application soon

Cover Personality

Petula Clark

At the Press Reception which followed *London Town*, that lamentable effort to put London into a musical film, I noticed a rather shy little girl of about 11 years sitting demurely on a chair behind the gossiping film critics and film technicians and stars. She was dealing with an ice cream and seemed quite apart from the clatter of publicity with which she was surrounded. She was not eager to talk about herself and I remember that our conversation consisted mainly of exchanges of view about the films we had recently seen. I saw her again at the Press Reception which followed *Vice Versa*, another gallant attempt to make us laugh which did not quite

come off. Once again the little girl was eating ice cream and sitting in a sheltered part of the room while the critics and others made their customary after-film noises. Again she smiled shyly and seemed unwilling to talk about her own work and we exchanged a few remarks about other people's films.

Since then, Petula Clark has appeared in *Easy Money*, the Huggetts films, *The Romantic Age* and, lately, as the probationer nurse in *White Corridors*. She began her film career in *Medal for the General* in 1944, and followed it up with a part in *Strawberry Road* and *I Know Where I'm Going*, for Archers, in 1946.

She also works very hard for the B.B.C. Whatever she does, whether the part be trivial or worthwhile, one notices the same intense earnestness to take trouble about films as such. The same pleasing shyness comes through the screen and one has the impression of an unspoilt personality. She has now reached the dangerous age for child film stars who have made the grade from little girl to teen-ager.

JOHN VINCENT.

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A FILM REVIEW



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National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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Vice-President: THE RT. REV. ABBOT UPSON, O.S.B.

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

Organ of the Catholic Film Institute

Vol. IV

October 1951

No. 10

FILMS, FUN AND THE FAITH

The majority of people who go to the pictures think of the cinema only in terms of entertainment, which is a pity; such narrow vision of the purpose and the power of this modern medium of disseminating ideas prevents a just appraisal of films made by cineastes who have ventured, for their subjects, into the fields of science, medicine, travel, art and religion.

There is a time to laugh and there is a time to learn; a time to be gay and a time to be serious . . . to reflect and meditate upon the deep creative truths of our Faith. Shooting pictures for salvation is (at least!) as important as shooting pictures for fun. To limit films to the world of fun is the quickest way to destroy films *and* fun. There is not the slightest reason why the Faith and films should be afraid of each other.

All play and no work makes Jack a dull boy. Publishing houses and libraries would be dull places if they published and circulated nothing but romances and bloods.

There are books published to entertain us; others to instruct and interest us in the arts and the crafts; some sharpen our wits and enlarge our mental horizon; others nourish our faith and enkindle loyalty to the Higher Things. Should not the range of our films be as wide as the range of our books?

There are first-class publishing houses that specialise in publishing religious books. There are first-class authors who specialise in writing books about religion. Should not an honourable place be given to film companies and film artists who reveal the romance and the wonder of religion?

Focus offers its congratulations to "The Companions of the Cross" who have recorded in telling, simple, dignified film-language the drama of Calvary.

The film *Hamlet* brought to the multitudes a love of Shakespeare; *Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffmann* brought to them an appreciation of ballet. The Catholic film *Behold the Man* (made by the Companions of the Cross under the inspiration of Fr. Carr and Fr. Meyjes) will bring to them an awareness of the redemptive and healing power of the Pain of Christ.

EDITOR.

I SHOULD KNOW

By a Nun-Projectionist

This Article Should Interest Every Responsible Parent

Scene: The large study hall of a Catholic College where an audience of 100 girls, ages ranging from seven to seventeen, is seated. A rubberised-canvas screen is rigged up in front, while down at the back of the hall a Nun-projectionist gives the fly-wheel of the 16mm. machine a preliminary turn, nods "lights out" to her assistant, fingers a couple of switches and . . . the show is on.

Experience Taught Me

That setting is familiar to me. Over a period of years the routine job of exhibiting a feature film programme to a more or less receptive juvenile audience has been mine. I have become "educated", so to speak, in the strengths, the weaknesses and in the idiosyncrasies of famed screen personalities. I have done more; I've been faced by a problem which forces me to ask all likely to be interested why, in the name of common sense, we don't do something practical in the matter of securing suitable screen entertainment for our children and 'teenagers.

There are two facts related to 16mm. sound-projectors that deserve attention: these machines have come to stay, and the feature programmes available to exhibitors using the models are limited in number, being mostly reprints of films seen a few years ago by picture-show goers.

Any manager of the 16mm. department in the Film House Agencies will tell you that superiors and principals of our Catholic colleges, schools and institutions are in ever-increasing

numbers bringing these particular models into their establishments for entertainment and educative purposes.

Experience taught me that children will not be satisfied for long with programmes made up exclusively of, for instance, the excellent shorts supplied by the N.S.W. Documentary Film Council; they demand a story. This is particularly so with students residing in boarding school. On vacation they see the shows of the moment; back at college, they want to know why the same pleasure should not be theirs, especially when they subscribe to an entertainment fund. And they are logical. But—this question is not rooted in narrow-mindedness; it comes from one of the thousands who want progress, yet not at the price of injury to souls—what, I ask, have the Australian Distributing Agencies for American Film Companies to offer a Religious exhibitor? Well, I should know.

Verbal Battle

The issue raised in this article led to many a verbal battle between representatives of the aforesaid agencies and myself; they are not primarily to blame; the actual culprits are the men behind the Hollywood producers; the men who finance the industry; the men, who have given practically no consideration to the planning, the steady building up, and to the maintaining of a supply of juvenile-level films able to fill the hearts of our boys and girls with fun and happiness, to stir them to an appreciation of goodness, truth and beauty.

A famed Hollywood magnate gave recently a most unflattering estimate of the number of adults capable of understanding and enjoying any but films of a low intellectual grade. So, we can take it, that in making films, men of the industry cater for morons and find it a sound investment. However, before he dismissed the subject, this gentleman, who has facts at his finger-tips, would do well in conjunction with his fellow-controllers of the world's major film output, to examine personal responsibility towards that public he so uncompromisingly catalogues.

It is Hollywood and its masters, those who buy material for films and instruct script and scenario writers as to the manner in which it is to be handled, it is these men who have, in the matter of films, educated countless devotees of the silver screen; they compose and pipe the tune to which the public dances. These had it in their power from the start to train to a high degree of artistic appreciation and discrimination the taste and appetites of those whom they entertained, instead of warping, blunting and destroying these faculties. Hollywood created the public's urge to see films, hardened it into a fixed habit comparable to that of an inveterate cigarette smoker, and gave it little upon which to satisfy itself. These conditions still obtain.

For the Sake of the Children

It is disturbing to watch the same old process at work upon each generation as the youngsters aware of the lure of the film, line up with its fans. Children and immature adolescents cannot weigh standards in the balance and condemn them; they go to the shows, see what has become a traditional presentation, absorb it, as a sponge absorbs water and continue to do so even unto old age. It is a tragedy.

It is for the sake of the children that I am throwing my pebble into the pond, hoping that the ripples may attract people able and willing to fight in their behalf, for a square deal. Those only whose main business in life is to be with them, to shape them for both earth and heaven, may form

an idea of the delicacy of children's hearts and minds, and of the ease with which they can be damaged. Juvenile crime-waves are often subjects of discussion. I have no hesitation in naming the film as a mighty factor in these outbreaks against convention, law and order.

The child moves in a world of fantasy; to us it may often seem precocious, old beyond its years in worldly ways but it lacks experience and maturity which, for the adult, are shock-absorbers. Youth is not conditioned for adjustment to the heavy play of notions born of "grown-up" conceptions of life as embodied in the film. Abnormal reaction to undue pressure exerted on imagination and the emotions is what we must expect from juveniles if we persist in allowing them to be subjected to disruptive influences they cannot resist.

Again, child-interest in films is deep, persistent and thorough. Open the subject with any youngster; you will be surprised at the amount of data touching films, actors and actresses he has filed away in his mind. This, incidentally, goes to show how the cinema rightly directed could revolutionise the existing educational system; the reverse rules that, mishandled, it could and is working incalculable harm.

The Religious Exhibitor

Films and the Child could be discussed from many angles. I prefer to narrow it down to a single aspect of the problem, namely the type of feature-film sent by distributors to our Catholic colleges and schools owning projectors.

What, for the most part, does the Religious-exhibitor of the 16mm. handle? With rare exception—I speak from experience—films spoil by purple patches—drooling, sloppy sentimentality—sources of embarrassment to teachers and a direct menace to inflammable adolescence. The so-called "love interest", deemed indispensable, is positively vulgar, indelicate and inartistic in its demonstration; it is worse, much worse, in its decided appeal to sensuality, and our children

should not be subjected to such an onslaught.

Consideration of the matter highlights a particular fact, viz., Australian Agencies for American Film Industry have practically nothing but adult movies to offer for children's entertainment. And for us, that is not good enough.

Reviewing the situation, there arises from Catholic tradition and background an implication which cannot be ignored. We know and regret that in holiday times numbers of our children go to unsuitable, often objectionable shows; but if films concerned with adult problems solved in sensual, passionate settings be exhibited by one dressed in the livery of Christ, then the harm done the children, individually and collectively, could never be estimated.

Instinctively the Catholic youngster sets the priest, the brother, the nun, apart from these things; should that attitude of mind and heart ever be destroyed then a great battle will have been lost.

We must not take the risk of giving any boy, any girl, in after-school life the opportunity of saying: "Well, the show we did tonight leaves an ugly taste in the mouth; but we saw some nearly, if not quite as bad, at College; perhaps we're squeamish—unnecessarily."

Catholic Agency

Let the steps that could be taken to better the situation as it now stands be the next consideration. The ideal solution is, of course, a Catholic Distributing Agency. I know of one organisation, The Catholic Film Centre, Box 380, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., which is gathering strength to fight in our best interests. Already it is building up its own library of films; but, to be really effective, expansion on a large scale is absolutely necessary, and this means money and plenty of it.

Failing, for the moment, an adequate supply of suitable films from Catholic sources, our next plan should be to insist that the feature films we hire be in conformity with Catholic Principles of morality. This may appear naïve; let us ask to have the Catholic angle

on films for children brought to the notice of film manufacturers in both America and England; properly organised, our demands should influence supplies.

It is sound business not to sign lengthy contracts with one particular agency; six months is quite sufficient, and gives one the chance of selecting the best films offered.

Finding out in advance from posters and write-ups procured at negligible cost from the agencies, the subject-matter of films we are notified to expect, enables one to avail oneself of the rejection privilege. It is not difficult to cancel a programme if sufficient notice be given by the exhibitor.

It could be pointed out to producers that there is no lack of clean, juvenile literature suitable for screen adaptation. The fact that the world over, children form a large section of picture-show goers should be stressed and used as a basic argument in defence of their right to consideration.

Some might say that youngsters, modern youngsters, would not sit out shows featuring films built on children's stories. Let us try them, and if their reaction is negative, then adults, upon whose shoulders grave responsibility rightly rests, must surely come to realise that juvenile ideas regarding films are in urgent need of sound, healthy re-orientation.

Over To You

Know this: when a censor classifies a film he says, in effect, "Over to you," to parents, teachers and guardians; what the children line up to see, so far as he is concerned, is anybody's business. But we, who realise we are dealing with immortal souls, cannot shelve responsibility; we must guard and cherish and train those under our care, remembering always that the hour will surely come when we shall stand in the Presence of Him Who said: " . . . whosoever shall scandalise one of these little ones . . . it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

(By courtesy of the Editor of
"The Crusader".)



THE LAST SUPPER
A scene from the film, "Behold the Man"

The Story Behind The

Westminster Passion Play

In the winter of 1938, two priests of the Westminster Diocese decided to make a Passion Play to be performed by young people who were under their care, as a Meditation both for themselves and for those who should see it, in preparation for Holy Week. For the text, they made a Harmony of the Four Gospels, deciding that it would be better to read the story and have it illustrated in mime than to take the risk of writing original dialogue.

And so, in *Passiontide 1939*, this play, called *ECCE HOMO*, was first performed in a clubroom in the Vauxhall Bridge Road. In spite of an improvised stage and a rather primitive production, one of the Catholic papers remarked that it made theatrical history by combining in this way speech from a narrator with silent action and with appropriate music selected from the great Masters.

The play was not performed again until 1948, this time on a much larger scale, in the Westminster Cathedral Hall. The success of that year's performance and of the subsequent performances in the three following years led to the idea of making a film of it, not only in order to bring it before a much larger audience, but also because the artistic quality of the stage production promised excellent material for a film of equal artistic interest.

The problem of finding a suitable director and technicians and a suitable film studio was solved without difficulty, for the project of making a religious film of this kind was received with immense enthusiasm by all those who were approached, and the Film Censor, who saw the play, gave an assurance that, owing to the special treatment of the subject, no objection would be lodged on this occasion to the portrayal of Christ on the screen. So that, in fact, it is the first time this has been allowed in Great Britain.

The only serious difficulty lay in keeping together the cast, for it was agreed that those who had acted in the play should also appear in the film. They were all amateurs, working during the day and devoting their spare time to rehearsals and performances. Among them was a baker, a tourist agent, several electrical engineers, a book-keeper, office workers, a window-dresser and others who would find difficulty in leaving their employment to go filming, while the figure of Christ was portrayed by a priest who, with the approach of Easter, would have little time to spare from his parish. But with the enthusiasm of the company and by making a part of the film during the run of the play, the problem was surprisingly overcome.

The shooting script of this film has been based on the play expressed in terms of the screen. It is not an attempt to reconstruct and present the whole history of the Passion of Christ but, as was the play, it is a visual meditation on the events of the last week of His life. As such it is offered to the public, trusting that in these times it may remind those who see it of the message of hope which is the Story of the Cross.

Highly Recommended

We direct the attention of our readers to a really valuable article on the Christian and the Cinema in the current issue of *Blackfriars*, the monthly magazine edited by the English Dominicans. It is written by Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart and is a notable contribution to Catholic thought on the subject.

THE FILM ACTOR

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Though numerous stage actors adapt themselves to screen acting with little apparent effort, a great many screen actors have never appeared on the stage and it is doubtful whether they could do so with success. At first sight, the actor, whether on stage or screen, is performing in the same way insofar as the spectator is concerned, to whom it rarely occurs that stage and screen make fundamentally different demands on the performer. On the stage there is acting in the real sense of the word, the actors playing through a story from start to finish, building up their characters as the play proceeds. On the screen they appear to be doing the same thing, or rather to have done the same thing when the film was being made, whereas they did nothing of the sort, for, as we have learnt, every scene and fragment of action is filmed separately, out of story order for building and technical reasons.

Thus the screen actor has no chance to build up the character he is playing. Instead he has to rely entirely on the film director to explain what is needed in this or that brief action. This is acting of quite a different kind and helps to explain why some screen actors do not possess the abilities needed to succeed on the stage. It applies particularly to many glamorous film stars who, if judged by the highest standards of legitimate stage acting, would be found without talent, depending as they do primarily on their looks. The screen actor has to be photogenic, with a strong personality, the right kind of voice (which is not necessarily the voice of a well-trained stage actor) and an ability to register emotions by facial expressions and mannerisms.

On the stage, actors naturally remain *life-size* throughout a play, and save to those in the front half of the stalls, they appear quite small. To people in the circle, upper circle and gallery, they look tiny, especially in large

theatres. Hence the value of opera glasses to bring them near. But in the cinema opera glasses are unnecessary because the camera does their work and brings the actors near in close-ups at the right moments to give dramatic emphasis to a situation.

Therein lies the difference between stage and screen presentation. Screen actors are seen in hundreds of different positions and angles in a feature film, near, very near, distant, and so on. Consequently, their facial expressions and gestures must never be overdone.

Compare such "acting" conditions with those of the stage actor, dwarfed by a large stage, who has to project his personality and his voice unaided by technical magnification. Remember, a close-up of a face might well be six feet high—as tall as a tall man—*face only*. An actor such as Sir Laurence Olivier who excels both on stage and screen and also produces his own films is the exception. Charlie Chaplin is another rarity—a master of screen technique who began on the stage. There are not many.

Generally speaking, the stage actor cannot easily flower to the full when acting for the screen, being imprisoned by technical needs, acting for merely a minute, or perhaps a few seconds at a time—never playing through an entire story; being the victim of distractions and delays and the uninspiring conditions prevalent in every film studio. Indeed the screen actor must be able to act, but very differently to the stage actor. In the studio the actor has to be taken and retaken until a scene is perfect, for only the best take will reach the public, whereas the stage actor gives a fresh performance every night.

The real star of a film is the director whom you never see, save *reflected* in the performances of the entire cast. Upon his ability to inspire and extract dramatic expression from screen actors *their* success depends.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*

VALENTINO

Starring: Eleanor Parker, Anthony Dexter, Richard Carlson, Patricia Medina, Joseph Calleia. **Director:** Lewis Allen. A Columbia Picture. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 105 minutes.*

The ethics of the entertainment film world are *sui generis*. Taking advantage of the fact that it is twenty-five years since the death of Rudolph Valentino and that there are in existence large fans societies devoted to his memory, a film has been made—not to tell the story of his life—that might lead to the law courts—but to “reveal the man behind the legend”. The result is that to the name of Rudolph Valentino they have attached a sleek, fattening face bearing a resemblance to the dead man and a quite fantastically untrue story of a cad who uses women’s affections to get himself hoisted to the peaks of filmdom and who, finally, dies from peritonitis after marrying one woman to save the honour of another whom he has already wronged.

Curiosity Interest

The technicolor, as is so often the case, makes a vulgar film seem even more so. The acting of Anthony Dexter as Valentino is not poorer, as my memory serves me, than that of his prototype. The rest of the cast, particularly Richard Carlson as a silent-film director, are good. The film has little beyond a curiosity interest. The tango, danced by the leading players, reminds one that such apparently “respectable” choreography can be unhealthy.

V.

THE FROGMEN

Starring: Richard Widmark, Dana Andrews and Gary Merrill. **Director:** Lloyd Baker. A 20th Century-Fox Picture. *Certificate: U. Category: B. Running time: 97 minutes.*

There is, apparently, some controversy as to whether Americans or British were the first to make use of underwater demolition tactics during the war. It matters little from the point of view of one’s admiration for the team-work, skill, courage and heroism displayed by the men known to the world as “Frogmen” whether they wore U.S.A. or U.K. on their bathing trunks; they were equally brave and patriotic: even the Japs, against whom the Americans in this film were working, displayed the same kind of courage underwater in the same kind of froglike uniform.

The underwater pictures of these men going about their difficult task are among the most fascinating of their kind ever to be shown on the screen. There is a peculiar grace in the movements of the men as, equipped with fins for their feet and glass frames for their faces, they go about their submarine sabotage.

The story is mainly documentary in shape and treatment. The *Twelve O’Clock High* twist to the story does not add much to the interest of the film. Richard Widmark as a new commander whose unpopularity with his team is eventually broken down by various brave deeds is not entirely convincing, any more than Dana Andrews as the leader of the childish team who want to be transferred because their present is not like their late commander.

V.

PEOPLE WILL TALK

Starring: Cary Grant and Jeanne Crain, with Finlay Currie, Hume Cronyn, Walter Slezak, Sidney Blackmer, Basil Ruysdael, Katharine Locke. **Producer:** Darryl F. Zanuck. **Director:** Joseph L. Mankiewicz. *Certificate:* A. *Category:* A. *Running time:* 110 minutes.

The claim that this is the "picture of the year" cannot be sustained. We have two plots gradually—very gradually—developed for our entertainment. First, how is Dr. Praetorius, that nice unconventional medico (Cary Grant), going to help the appealing unmarried mother who is troubled with faintings and the occasional pregnant wince of pain? Well, in an inescapably happy way he marries her. Secondly,

who is Shunderson, the doctor's devoted shadow with just a touch of the sinister? A jealous colleague (Hume Cronyn) of the doctor busies himself in dragging out that skeleton from what he imagines to be the shady past. But Shunderson (Finlay Currie) in a dramatic scene intervenes at the board of investigation so that Dr. Praetorius is cleared and able to keep his appointment of conducting, of course with bravura, the orchestra of his happy students

There are pomposities—for we are in the world of cinematic medicine—but the dialogue can be amusing, sometimes one feels it is amusing in spite of itself. There is a lot of charm about, what with Cary Grant and Jeanne Crain, Sidney Blackmer and Walter Slezak. And the rigid shoulders and straight down hands of Finlay Currie have a dramatic quantity of their own before ever he speaks a word.

X.



Shunderson warns Dr. Praetorius that Annabel will try to commit suicide again

FRANCIS GOES TO THE RACES

Starring: Donald O'Connor, Piper Laurie, and Francis, the Talking Mule, with Cecil Kellaway and Jesse White. **Producer:** Leonara Goldstein. **Director:** Arthur Lubin. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** U. **Running time:** 87 minutes.

Comic humour is in some part akin to humility. It is humorous when a man slips up on a banana skin or loses his temper. Both are evidence, which we need now and then, that man is a pathetic being who naturally finds it difficult to keep his balance either physically or mentally. The true comic scenario suggests this. It helps us still more by hinting that however much human beings pretend they are God there is still hope left for mankind. But when we are given animals acting like intelligent people, what are we to gain from this?

Francis Goes to the Races is indeed a punter's dream, a bookie's nightmare and a riot of laughs, but it succeeds in being a good film in spite of Francis, the talking mule, because its human companion, Donald O'Connor, is a comedian in the tradition of Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd. Whereas the other characters in the film, despite all-round good acting, appear merely foolish in this fantastic story Donald O'Connor remains a human being.

It is repulsive to see a mule talking down to a crowd of human beings and running the show, but nevertheless the close-to-hysteria which greeted some of the impossible situations during the show is sufficient proof that the comedy was good enough to keep this feeling of repulsion in the background. Not content with giving inside information straight from the horse's mouth enabling his master to back seven winners in a row, Francis, after a bad attack of mulishness, agrees to help the lost fortunes of the girl's (Piper Laurie) father (Cecil Kellaway) by curing a filly's inferiority complex by psycho-analysis and persuading the gallant favourite to stop dead in its tracks in sight of the winning-post.

The film is well produced and

directed, has a good supporting cast and you will feel much gayer for having seen it.

O.

QUEEN OF THE WEST

Starring: Maria Hart, Drake Smith, William Fawcett. A Jack Schwarz Production. Monarch Film. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 60 minutes.

Rather a new theme for a Western, and a good Western at that. This time the cowboy becomes cowgirl, and a tough one she makes. She is called the Queen of the West because she is always one move ahead of other cattle owners. But the West is ruled by the rod. So there is plenty of shooting, holding-up of coaches, driving of cattle and all the things which go to make for a fast moving, entertaining film. There is a rough justice, a relic of youthful hero worship in these films which gives them a sweeter flavour than the town gangster lot. There are countryside, horses and a little chivalry left which go to make this sort of picture always a stand-by.

M.

RHUBARB

Starring: Ray Milland, Jean Sterling, **Producers:** William Perlberg and George Seaton. **Director:** Arthur Lubin. A Paramount Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 95 minutes approximately.

I heartily recommend this nonsensical and wholly delightful film to any reader who wants an afternoon's light entertainment. Even if, like myself, you don't know the first thing about baseball you can't help being amused, as the jaded critics at the press show showed by their laughter that they were.

It is well acted, though the chief star is neither of those named above: he —yes he—is Rhubarb; for Rhubarb is a cat and a very remarkable one! Go and make his acquaintance.

T. C. F.

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

Starring: Richard Derr, Barbara Rush, Harry Keating. **Producer:** George Pal. **Director:** Rudolf Maté. **Distributors:** Paramount. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 82 minutes.

Apart from some good faked photography of the possible results of a star colliding with the earth and suitable sound effects, there is little to commend in this film except to those who might, like myself, enjoy such fantasies. As the film had to have a story, for it is based on a novel by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie, Sidney Boehm obliged, but it is the most unimaginative imaginable. That very poor film, *Saints and Sinners*, which also had as its theme the end of the world, did it a great deal better. Since for the average Christian the end of one's own life is infinitely more important than the end of the world, this film will probably leave you quite cold. That is if you go, and personally I think you would be wasting your time and your money. It is, as the titling says, unsuitable for children, but only because of the noise.

O.

VALLEY OF EAGLES

Starring: Jack Warner, Nadia Gray, John McCallum. **Producer:** Nat Bronsten. **Director:** Terence Young. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

The cinema must be topical without being embarrassing. And so this story of a disappearing scientist is located in Sweden. This has the additional advantage of bringing in the sub-Arctic regions of the northern frontiers.

Though John McCallum in furs and horn-rimmed glasses looks disconcertingly like Harold Lloyd, and Nadia Gray does not look at all like a female Lapp, though the film may be a little naïve sometimes when the scene is civilised, it is sometimes magnificent when the fugitives reach the northern snows. (The scientist has run away with another scientist's wife as well as with secret and essential parts of an

invention with an enormous "war potential".)

There is a particularly good sequence of a large reindeer herd on the move. Unfortunately most of the herd stampedes over a precipice. In fact animals come off rather badly in this picture. Wolves are attacked and killed by eagles. (This will not be everybody's taste.) But those who want to see something original and scenic, including the descent of an avalanche, should go to this picture.

Confidence in God is inculcated by reading a psalm to children. And the fact is recognised that when a marriage comes to grief, the fault may not be all on one side. These are two straws which indicate a wind blowing in the right direction.

Q.

SOLDIERS THREE

Starring: Stewart Granger, Walter Pidgeon, Robert Newton, David Niven, with Cyril Cusack and Greta Gynt. **Distributors:** M.-G.-M. **Director:** Tay Garnett. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

Lovers of Kipling may find their familiar soldiers three changed in more than name in this film version of the famous story, but they will find enough amusement of a light character to make the film worth a visit. Dealing with military escapades in India at the turn of the century, the film is mainly notable for its galaxy of well-known male stars and the fact that Stewart Granger has no leading lady. Mr. Granger, in fact, makes quite a success of the Cockney soldier, here named Ackroyd, and reminded me that his best performance, as far as I am concerned, was his Cockney Spiv in *Waterloo Road*.

Robert Newton and Cyril Cusack play up loyally as the other two soldiers, but it seems to me a lamentable waste of talent to exile to Hollywood two of our best character actors, when any two of a score of Hollywood natives could have played the parts in the required slap-stick fashion. Walter Pidgeon roisters through the rôle of the Colonel and David Niven is well-suited as his Adjutant.

V.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Starring: Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, Oscar Levant, Georges Guetary and Nina Foch. **Director:** Vincente Minelli. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 114 minutes.

When M.-G.-M. set out to do something different they can usually be depended upon to provide something worthwhile. This time it is a musical with a difference. Owing something to both *The Red Shoes* and *On The Town* it nevertheless stands on its own twinkling feet and marks a new

standard of excellence in the world of eccentric dancing for which the name of Kelly has now come to be ranked above that of Astaire. The dream ballet with which the film ends is brilliant; a few minutes too long for comfort, perhaps, but most agreeable to watch.

The trite story of the penniless painter in Paris who is taken up by a wealthy patroness while the girl he really loves feels herself bound in gratitude to accept another man as husband has often been told. This time it is garnished with dancing, song and comedy of a definitely high order. Gershwin's music and the acting of Oscar Levant, Georges Guetary and Gene Kelly and the appearance of a most enchanting little French ballerina, Leslie Caron, make this a memorable film which can be recommended to those who (like myself) do not much care for musicals.

V.

DECISION BEFORE DAWN

Starring: Richard Basehart, Gary Merrill, Oskar Werner, Hildegard Neff. **Producers:** Anatole Litvak and Frank McCarthy. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 120 minutes.

My growing dread of stories based upon American war exploits was swept away by the reality and sincerity which I found in this film version of George Howe's novel "Call It Treason". The reality began with the cast, which is not blatantly Hollywood and is remarkably good throughout. Richard Basehart and Gary Merrill are real American and are meant to be. But the biggest credit goes to the sensitive playing of a sad-faced, idealistic young German medical corporal by Oskar Werner, well backed as he is by such names as Hildegard Neff, Dominique Blanchard and Hans Christian Blech. Moreover, the photography is really done in Germany, a Germany of bomb-scarred ruins and siren-driven crowds far different from the cardboard and three-ply of California.



SCENES FROM THE FILM



The story is harrowing, very moving and not at all the usual blood and breath-catching escapes. There is a query behind it for each one of us to face in these days of spy trials, missing diplomats and fellow-travellers of what does treason consist?

Here we have German prisoners-of-war being chosen as volunteers to train for spy work behind their own lines, in order to help the American advance. Their motives vary: Tigar (Hans Christian Blech) is out for the winning side and the financial benefit of being "well in" with the conqueror; Happy (Oskar Werner) hates the Hitlerism which ruins his country and causes the death of his disillusioned friend at the hands of his fellow prisoners. Happy is the one we follow chiefly. He is sent on a mission among his own people. The psychological study is interesting when he sees them as a mixture of good and bad, embittered, depraved, yet battered and fighting on dauntlessly. He has to struggle with himself and with his ideals. Ideals? Must they result in the starvation of his own people, in telling the location of a new chemical works next to his father's hospital, sure target for American pattern-bombing?

Today, six years later, we can again catch the rift in Germany and not only there but elsewhere too. The cry of the officer who has to win over the surrender of the panzer corps is that the object now is to do more than save lives even, it is to save their souls. Yet we are bound to sympathise with Happy, although we leave him in Nazi hands, knowing he will be shot as a spy, for helping his companion to swim the Rhine with vital information. Is this treason? In the darkness of the cinemas crowded with emotions, Happy grows to heroic stature. Yet suppose it was daylight and his name was Quisling or Fuchs or Pontecorvo?

You should certainly see this film. As I say it is harrowing, but the two hours of it passed quickly. And the human touches like the good Sister of St. Vincent de Paul peddling away on her bicycle as the despatch rider roars up to the door, or the couple of children glimpsed playing ball in the background of a tense street scene—these make the picture live.

M.

MURDER INC.

Starring: Humphrey Bogart. **Director:** Bretaigne Windust. **Producer:** Milton Sperling. **Distributors:** Warner Brothers. **Certificate:** X. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 83 minutes.

The fact that this film has been given an X Certificate is sufficient indication of its unsuitability, not to say worthlessness. There is really nothing about it to recommend. The story about a gang of murderers, is just as sordid as it can be without even being exciting; the construction is bad, with so many flash-backs as to become confusing; and the acting is indifferent. Don't waste either time or money on it.

T. C. F.

HIS KIND OF WOMAN

Starring: Robert Mitchum, Jane Russell, with Vincent Price, Tim Holt, Charles McGraw. **Producer:** Robert Sparks. **Director:** John Farrow. **Distributors:** R.K.O. Radio. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 120 minutes.

In addition to the information above we are told that Howard Hughes "presents" this film. The first time he presented Jane Russell was in *The Outlaw*, a picture characterised by revolver shooting, décolletage and a cynical contempt for the audience. *His Kind Of Woman* is that kind of film too, only less so.

The story is about the attempted re-introduction into the United States of a deported racketeer. It begins in a semi-documentary style, with maps, and ends (more or less) with a prolonged chase-and-fight, one of the weapons involved being a hypodermic syringe, loaded with a deadly drug, in the hands of an "unfrosted" doctor.

The best thing in the picture is the caricature of a film star by Vincent Price, but this is worked to death. The dialogue is sometimes good and includes the memorable suggestion that what people really want when they go to the cinema is to eat popcorn and be happy.

Q.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

MONTE CASSINO

Starring: Alberto C. Lolli. **Director:**

Aturo Gemmiti. From book by
Tommaso Lecciosotti, O.S.B.

Distributors: Film Traders.

Dialogue Italian. English

Prologue, Narrator and Sub-
titles. *Certificate: A. Class: A.*

Running time: 85 minutes
approximately.

Monte Cassino! Like religion, anyone will argue on the rights and wrongs of 1944. Certainly in England and among English Catholics, I have found few who admit any possible excuse for the Allied action. Ninety per cent say it was unnecessary vandalism and get all "worked-up" about it.

It makes this film all the more interesting, as here is the view of an Italian and a monk of the Abbey, whose opinion lies between outright condemnation and outright approval. And so, if you are one of those who condemns the decision to bomb, go along and see this film. Because, holding the view of the psychological necessity for the bombing, I found a real atmosphere of authentic and balanced history as the story unfolded. It is one-sided, because it is from the monk's outlook, but it is fair.

The first fifteen minutes were slow, awkward and quite baffling. Pre-war views of the monastery were all "stills" and so dead, with a dead dreary soliloquy. Later the tale was gripping, terrifying, harrowing and exhausting. The photography was good and the message, I thought for a time, was to boost the Communist Peace Plan. But after all, St. Benedict got in first with Pax.

Refugees flee to the monastery as war approaches. When the monastery is neutral zoned, no more may enter. Then with fighting more pour in. The Germans take up position near the walls, on the heights guarding Allied attack-routes. The ground attacks on the town of Cassino and the hill first avoid the monastery. (Though not shown many American and Commonwealth

troops died on the lower slopes of the Monastery Hill, cut off, dying of hunger and exposure, because of German defences higher up.) Then the Allies drop leaflets announcing the bombing, demanding civilian evacuation. The Abbot asks the Germans for permission to evacuate. Refusal. The bombing. Some civilians flee and are mown down by German guns. Horrifying scenes of collapsing roofs, ceilings, walls, people buried alive, panic. More bombing. More death. Only then are the survivors allowed to leave, a handful of monks led by the tottering Abbot carrying a cross and some hundred and fifty civilians.

A real life film, so grim as to be unnatural. No monk smiles. A nightmare to see because even in dust and rubble God comes to his children in Viaticum.

M.

PATTES BLANCHES

(White Legs)

Starring: Suzy Delair, Fernand

Ledoux, Paul Bernard, Arlette
Thomas and Michel Bouquet.

Director: Jean Gremillon.

Distributors: Films de France.

Certificate: A. Category: A.

Running time: 80 minutes
approx.

The scenario of this film is the work of Jean Anouilh and Bernard Luc, the team responsible for *Monsieur Vincent*. There the connection ends. A novelettish story about the lonely squire of a Breton castle, disliked by the locals, maintaining the vanished grandeur of his philandering ancestor as best he can, the victim of the hatred of his repudiated half-brother, adored by a pathetic hunchback serving-maid from the village: the film is redeemed from nonentity by the acting of the principals and the photography, by Agostini, which is, at times, almost inspired.

There have been some obvious cuts by the Censor, but there still remain one or two bed-room scenes of a candour to which American and British cinema-goers are unaccustomed.

V.

TALE OF SIBERIA

In Russian, with English sub-titles.
In technicolor. *Certificate: U.*
Category: B. Running time:
100 minutes approximately.

This film was not shown to the Press, and owing to a late arrival at the public performance I am unable to give the names of the stars, who are not even billed outside the cinema. However, as they are all Russians and quite unknown to filmgoers in this country anyway, their names are not all that important.

The film is meant to be a glorification of Siberia and its people and of Stalin's development of it as opposed to the Tsars who regarded it merely as a penitentiary. It is also intended to show how happy are the Russians under Soviet rule—everyone dances and sings on the slightest provocation. But these bits of propaganda are quite innocuous and in no way interfere with

one's enjoyment of the film. It concerns a young pianist who has to give up playing owing to a hand injury received in battle: he turns to composition and produces a kind of oratorio with long orchestral interludes, during which he declaims the glories of Siberia and Stalin. (Perhaps one of our younger composers might do something of the same sort in honour of the Health Services or Nationalised Railways). For the rest the film is pleasing. The technicolor is excellent, far less gorgeous than that to which we are accustomed and some of the out-of-door shots, both of summer and winter scenery, are quite extraordinarily beautiful. The story is simple with plenty of honest love-making and is easily understood with the aid of English sub-titles. The acting is quite adequate. The only real blemish is the sound-track—most of the orchestral tone is very harsh.

On the whole I don't think you'll regret having seen it. T. C. F.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Films that are positively harmful are not included here. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (Vol. IV,
Nos. 8 and 9)

<i>Acc in the Hole</i>	(A) (232)
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	(B) (230)
<i>As Young As You Feel</i>	(257)
<i>Bandit General</i>	(C) (237)
<i>Bird of Paradise</i>	(A) (227)
<i>Born Yesterday</i>	(B) (236)
<i>Cattle Drive</i>	(D) (263)
<i>Chicago Masquerade</i>	(A) (260)
<i>Dear Brat</i>	(255)
<i>Go For Broke</i>	(B) (235)
<i>Golden Horde, The</i>	(A) (262)
<i>Half Angel</i>	(B) (263)
<i>Happy Go Lovely</i>	(B) (237)
<i>Hell is Sold Out</i>	(A) (254)
<i>Here Comes the Groom</i>	(B) (256)
<i>Hotel Sahara</i>	(B) (233)
<i>I'd Climb the Highest Mountain</i>	(B) (231)
<i>Last Outpost, The</i>	(B) (259)

<i>Lavender Hill Mob, The</i>	(C) (226)
<i>Law and the Lady, The</i>	(A) (262)
<i>Life in Her Hands</i>	(A) (260)
<i>Love Happy</i>	(A) (259)
<i>Man in the White Suit, The</i>	(C) (253)
<i>Midnight Episode</i>	(B) (227)
<i>"Mr. Universe"</i>	(B) (235)
<i>My Forbidden Past</i>	(A) (236)
<i>Never a Dull Moment</i>	(B) (234)
<i>No Highway</i>	(C) (257)
<i>No Resting Place</i>	(A) (256)
<i>Operation Pacific</i>	(B) (234)
<i>Phantom Horseman, The</i>	(C) (258)
<i>Prince who was a Thief, The</i>	(C) (261)
<i>Red Mountain</i>	(B) (261)
<i>Rich, Young and Pretty</i>	(B) (258)
<i>Show Boat</i>	(B) (234)
<i>Sound of Fury, The</i>	(A) (254)
<i>Strangers on a Train</i>	(A) (255)
<i>Talk of a Million</i>	(B) (259)
<i>Up Front</i>	(C) (235)
<i>Vendetta</i>	(B) (230)
<i>When I Grow Up</i>	(C) (261)
<i>Wherever She Goes</i>	(C) (260)
<i>Whirlpool</i>	(A) (233)
<i>White Corridors</i>	(A) (231)
<i>Worm's Eye View</i>	(B) (258)
<i>You Belong to My Heart</i>	(B) (233)



CATHOLIC | 16mm. FILM USERS AND ENTHUSIASTS

At the fourth congress of the O.C.I.C. in Brussels in 1947 Dr. Jean Bernard, President of the O.C.I.C., summed up the plan of action decided upon when he said: "We have to be active in all five stages of the cinema . . . we must influence the public, the cinema, the distributor, the producer, the legislator. This will not be done by building up a Catholic cinema inside the real cinema, but only by penetrating the professional life of the cinema and bringing to it all the riches of our Faith."

16mm. enthusiasts have an excellent opportunity to put this plan into action.

In future we shall devote space to 16mm. films.

"GULLIVER'S TRAVELS" AND OTHER 16mm. RELEASES

The season for amateur film shows is upon us again and parish halls, convents, colleges and schools will have been wise if they have already mapped out their programmes for the winter and spring terms.

Practically every worthwhile film produced in normal 35mm. or theatrical gauge is eventually reduced to 16mm. and becomes available to the non-theatrical enthusiast. We take this opportunity to mention a few of the outstanding new releases in entertainment films.

Worth Booking

Walt Disney has such a hold on the imagination as the teller of fairy stories in cartoon that it is sometimes overlooked that other names also have a share of limelight in this field of picture-making. The Fleischer Brothers, whose work preceded that of Disney, produced in 1939 a full-length version of *Gulliver's Travels*. If it has little real connection with Dean Swift's rather bitter satire apart from the names of the characters, it is at least as legitimately entertaining as any of the Disney classics, and should prove very popular with those requiring a programme mainly intended for children. We anticipate heavy bookings for the new 16mm. version.

Worth Attention

An M.-G.-M. film which might engage the attention of the Catholic film groups is *San Francisco*, made in 1936 and starring Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy and Jeanette McDonald. It wears remarkably well and the great earthquake scenes are as authentic and terrifying as ever. Spencer Tracy's performance as a Catholic is first-rate.



Popular Continental Films

We have already had occasion to mention that the popular *Sorcier du Ciel*, the story of the Curé d'Ars, is now obtainable in 16mm. The same distributors, Films de France, also

announce *Jour de Fête*, the Chapielinesque comedy about a French village postman and his adventures when the circus comes to town. Lasting 79 minutes, it will become a favourite with those who look for something different from the average run of American slap-stick. It has definite atmosphere.

French film now to be had in 16mm., *Nous les Gosses* (Us Kids), directed by Louis Daquin, tells of comradeship in a French school, though it is not very suitable for youngsters to see, being rather more sophisticated than English children are accustomed to.

An Italian film which is entertaining without being morbid as some of the modern Italian films are is *Angelina*, with Anna Magnani as a matron whose direct-action methods lessen some of the post-war annoyances in the Roman slums. It runs for 90 minutes and has an "A" Certificate but is suitable for adolescents as well.

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The Masses and the Cinema

An Approach

By Neville Braybrooke

As one walks down the drive of Max Reinhardt's former home near Salzburg, one is tempted to think sometimes as one passes a large sprawling house standing to the left of Schloss Leopoldskron: "How like a stage setting! Why, with the sun streaming through on that courtyard, it might be the first act of a play by the Quintero Brothers, or the second act of *Arms and the Man*!" The impression may only linger for a moment, but impressions of such an essentially dramatic nature can be multiplied endlessly: one recalls sightseers in the summer being taken round Hampton Court who think rather of Charles Laughton than Henry VIII and of those who cannot see the Colosseum from the Palatinate, but think of it in terms of the background to the re-staging of some new gladiatorial pageant.

Now all these impressions in varying degrees are significant as reflections for the order of their thought, since in each case the dramatic is given precedence over the historical past or present reality. Moreover, the cinema, because of the wide network of distribution at its disposal, has an impact on its public which is more or less immediate; indeed going to the cinema is becoming such a habit that discrimination on the part of the audience is becoming a thing of the past, and consequently the assertion of a genuine critical attitude to films by the public can hardly be expected as a thing of the future.

Responsibility Towards Cinema

For films taken in such regular doses—and box-office receipts show that for many they are no longer merely a weekly event but a thrice-weekly event—are combining to blunt the mind, to make it unfit for voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of savage torpor. Of its effect alone in one direction an interesting comment by a girl of 18 may be cited which appeared some time back in *Picturegoer*. She wrote: "For a whole year I thought, talked

and dreamed films and Errol Flynn became my screen idol. His good looks, handsome physique and most of all his moustache made me feel as if I was in love. However, when the war broke out, I found that my idol had feet of clay and would not join the army. Thus ended my infatuation . . ."

Left to run riot, or at least when this kind of infatuation is carried beyond the adolescence of girls with goo-goo eyes, one is up against that kind of hero-worship which, if it cannot be checked by being sublimated, paves the way for the recurrence of those events in the thirties that led to the supremacy of Nazidom in Germany. The German film industry in the way that it pandered to the public demand until, devoid of independence, it was swallowed by Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, is a case in point. It is as well a warning of what dangers would befall the film world were it to become nationalised. (of which talk has been in the air for some while.) So it is that unless a feeling of responsibility towards the cinema can be engendered in the public, the film industry with its enormous potentiality will become nothing other than a chain of studios whose juster designation would be dream factories.

Development of the Film

The development of the film in the last twenty years has been immense, and on a scale that can compete with the greatest industries. It has, for example, been estimated that the cost of a film ranges from that of founding a hospital to clearing over a square mile area of slums. Further, the film, like television, or rather the means by which television and films are made possible, stand for a piece of technology whose use is restricted to driving not only an engine, as with the modern hydro-turbine, but orientated towards the culture of life as a whole. (The same is true of course to a lesser extent when in the theatre use is made of cycloramas to give the impression of

moving clouds and rainstorms.) Within its studios, the film recruits aid that is both psychological and aesthetic, as well as purely mechanical, and it is upon all these contributory factors working in unison, together with a host more unmentioned here, that is dependent the harmony of one result—a film.

They Lack Humility

When therefore one deals with an art-form of such size and intricacy, the tendency is to regard its audience, because it is a larger audience than attends a theatre, in terms of masses. The tendency has caught on surprisingly quickly and anything that is popular nowadays is immediately dubbed as "fit for the masses". One finds this note coming through in books by Lewis Mumford like "Technics and Civilisation" (1934); in parts of Karl Jaspers' early, but not more recent, philosophical writings; and in treatises of the calibre of Serge Chakotin's "The Rape of the Masses" (1939)—or, to come nearer the present, in William Vogt's "Road to Survival" (1949). It goes without saying, too, that in each case these authors are not without their lesser fry in the Press: for it is as if they would unite together, cut themselves off from mankind and then, with haughty disdain, attempt to diagnose the ills of their fellow men. Of this form of writing there has been no abatement since the war. Between Chakotin, Vogt and current commentators there have been many who have spoken thus and it must be admitted that in many cases their diagnosis in itself, *so far as it went*, has often been good: ultimately their failure to be fully convincing has lain elsewhere. In their inability in condemning the world at large of which they are a group, they have failed to take stock of their own part in the building of that very world: in short, they lack humility, and to this extent they have failed to allow for original sin. Yet when it comes to it, the girl with the goo-goo eyes is just as much a part of civilisation as they are: this is her world just as much as it is theirs. Masses never consist of masses alone: in them, each person is an individual, endowed with a soul, of which no two are the same; and salvation which is the end of each soul can only be achieved through the

fulfilment of vocation. To those who would plan Utopias, to those who are so ready to condemn the masses out of hand, it may not seem particularly important to be (perhaps) just a stenographer of eighteen working in a government office. Yet Christ came first and foremost to redeem men—not to draw distinctions and to give marks by intellectual preferment. He came to die for men and so redeem them from original sin.

Dead-End Arguments

With public responsibility viewed in this way and magnified beyond the realm of the cinema, one is faced with world events and audiences: one is faced with the continual retorts that no longer the individual voice counts; that world events are beyond personal control; that nothing any single person can do will prevent history from running its course. But to accept these dead-end arguments without a rejoinder is to reject faith which means a loss of freedom for all; since it means the denial of free will, because freedom can only be fully realised in community through faith. It is for this reason that the film which can both instruct and entertain becomes so dangerous when, like a cachou, it is taken as something to sweeten the taste against reality. The film is only a means of expression, in the way that Strindberg used his Dream Plays to express the reality behind an existence conceived of in terms other than those of pure animal appetite. This difference between Dream Plays and dream factories is finally one between passive and active acceptance; between rejecting to be more than a spectator and accepting to play the rôle of a participant. Yet for those who accept the rôle the challenge is theirs: it is a challenge like all truth in the form of a paradox since it is to see the present as it really becomes present, not as mere spectators, but as participants in its realisation; and in such a realisation a man's work is his prayer because it is his vocation. Intellectual *p r e f e r e n t* becomes subordinate to Christ's teaching of each according to his talents, since where there is true faith, God's light, as upon a screen, will shine not thrice weekly, but continuously — ever illuminating the way, ever making salvation a nearer reality.

Catholic Film Institute

Aims and Objects

No. 3—Discussion Groups

In a recent letter to *The Tablet*, answering a somewhat pedestrian attack upon the cinema, Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart, one of the most penetrating of our film critics, pointed out that "if those who should be leaders of taste and morals deliberately remain aloof and leave the cinema to be conducted by and for those whom they regard as morons and infants" they cannot be surprised if the cinema produces films of low average worth. On the other hand, as she points out, "there are each year, on a temperate estimate, I should say at least a dozen motion pictures one would be the poorer for missing. I doubt whether more could be said of contemporary 'still' paintings, plays, novels or musical compositions".

It is, indeed, astonishing in view of the general attitude of contempt which so many of our intellectuals and particularly Catholics affect towards the cinema that it manages to produce so many films worth talking about. Pope Pius XI was in no doubt as to the position and power of the cinema as a means of expression when he wrote that "it can and must be a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good". His injunction that each country do its best to "promote good motion pictures" has, in the past twelve months, received greater attention and it is gratifying to notice in almost every free country, energetic and fruitful attempts on the part of Catholics to bring this potent instrument under control. Even in England we have had some modest attempts to fill the gap of ignorance but they have been disappointingly supported and we have to look to France to find organised and extremely well-attended debates on current films such as *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes* and *Justice Est Faite*, the O.C.I.C. and Grand Jury Prize Winners at the 1950 Venice Festival respectively.

France, too, has its *Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques* (I.D.H.E.C) or Institute for Advanced Film Study where lectures are given and degrees obtained in the craft of cinema. Then there are in France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and other countries, organised Cine-Forums where films are discussed and analysed with as much attention and interest as that given to music, painting or the drama.

Pius XI demanded that Catholics should work to make the motion picture "an effectual instrument for the education and elevation of mankind." Nobody would deny that the vast majority of films are far from being either educative or elevating but that is because so few people take the trouble to work for anything better. It is equally true that probably never will the majority of films be of higher value than the majority of books published or music composed, but it is quite certain that a very large proportion of films made could be of permanent value as documents, poetic essays in movement and visual rhythm, entertaining and elevating camera comedies, if only people wanted them so and were able to recognise them when they were forthcoming.

In other words, we need more discussion about films. The cinema is, as Dr. Andre Ruskowski, the General Secretary of O.C.I.C., has pointed out in his "*Cinema, Art Nouveau*", a new language having its grammar and syntax and capable of expressing ideas in an entirely new and enchanting manner. This language needs to be learnt. Like all other languages, it yields up its full meaning only to those who take the trouble to master it.

The C.F.I. spends much time in organising lectures and conferences. Its officers go about the country giving talks and initiating discussions on film.

It is because we are convinced that the cinema is capable of contributing new and valuable expressions of the genius of man as a creature made in the image of God. It is because we have accepted the challenge of the Popes "to raise the standard of the motion picture to meet the needs of education and the requirements of the Christian conscience". It is because we are convinced that the best way to raise the standard is to learn to be content only with the best.

We think that in every school there should be a group organised to discuss films. We think that just as it is considered a part of general knowledge and culture to be able to talk intelligently about music and the drama, about painting and poetry, so should it be a part of general knowledge and culture to be able to analyse and evaluate the classics of the cinema repertory. There is a vast field for difference of opinion and taste in the domain of cinema art as there is in the other arts. But there are, as in the other arts, principles of artistic expression which require to be understood before further discussion is fruitful.

It goes without saying, of course, that, as in the other forms of art, morality is a prerequisite of good art in the cinema. Catholics who wish to see the standards of cinema elevated will not be satisfied with a purely negative lip-service to moral obligations. They will recognise that art is positive and must be cultivated, as virtue is positive and must be cultivated. They will recognise that a film is not a good film or worth seeing unless to moral orthodoxy is added the perfection of an intelligent craftsmanship. They will be willing to discuss dispassionately but with the satisfaction derived from knowledge based on truth the merits and demerits of films as a whole. They will hesitate to support a film merely because it is morally sound and deals with an edifying subject unless to that sound morality is added a high standard of technical excellence. This is only to apply to the art of cinema the rules that have governed the Church in its attitude to other forms of art. Only the best is good enough.

Discussion groups need to be carefully organised and efficiently conducted. Careful foundations both moral and artistic need to be laid but

members should not be frightened off by too rigorous an application of artistic principles to begin with. The purpose of such discussion groups as with any other kind of discussion is to lead gradually to the recognition of and acceptance of high standards. Within the limits imposed even by high standards there is great latitude for variations of taste and preference. There is no room for dictators nor the infallibly right among film critics. Once the foothills have been overcome the view at the top of the mountain is grand and everybody will have his own particular delight.

A discussion group in every parish with its members well-primed in film craftsmanship could be a tower of strength to positive Catholic film action. Their views on all films locally exhibited if expressed with calm conviction as to defects and merits, would be welcomed by the cinema managers as evidence of intelligent reaction to his wares and would ultimately lead to that elevation of the art of cinema which Pius XI insisted is possible.

J. A. V. BURKE.

Film Strips on the Mass

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BOOK REVIEW

Came the Dawn. By Andrew Buchanan, D.Litt., Ph.D.

Readers old enough to remember silent films need no introduction to Cecil Hepworth, but younger folk with a serious interest in film cannot afford to remain unacquainted with this great pioneer who laid most of the foundations for film production in Britain. Hepworth has just written his life (*Came the Dawn*, Phoenix House, 16s.) which I wholeheartedly recommend. It presents a most refreshing contrast in film-making to present-day boastful, sensational and materialistic methods, and is written in a gentle almost humble style which is delightful. Hepworth seeks no credits for his very great achievements. The book appears most appropriately at a time when attention is being focused on the film, *The Magic Box*, which pays tribute to Friese-Green, inventor of moving pictures, for it was Hepworth who developed this technical miracle into a new form of dramatic expression. Forty, fifty years ago he was making films of varying lengths, first in the open, then in a studio lit only by sunshine, and finally in artificially lit interiors. He gave us many films which will not be forgotten: *Coming through the Rye*, *Rescued by Rover*, several features adapted from the works of Dickens; Forbes-Robertson in *Hamlet*. And he "built up" stars, too—Alma Taylor, Chrissie White, Stewart Rome, Henry Edwards—but, above all, Hepworth evolved a formula for film-making which the industry today has unwisely forgotten, for he founded a stock-company—a sort of family affair. Actors, writers, cameramen, permanently employed, worked as a team with complete freedom. Anyone did anything. When the stars were not acting they were making the costumes, painting the scenery, typing scripts, helping in the office. It was a wonder-

ful little world, and the films were both economically produced and widely popular. Hepworth looks sadly at filmdom today, for it is utterly unlike the film world he established. It has not only grown too big for its boots, but is down at heel through blind extravagance. Though quiet, and essentially friendly, Hepworth has the fire and vision of the individualist, and sometimes in these pages his pen points to the stupidity and danger of current methods. He says only a complete revolution can put the industry back on its feet, and gives a long list of all the technicians employed in a modern studio unit, comparing it to his small talented company which supplied a blue-print for creative production. He says little about religion, but his faith is revealed in his life, his true love of beauty, his kindness and his courage. Many are the technical advances for which we have to thank him, and many films too, ranging from historic news reels dating back to the funeral of Queen Victoria to feature films of first class quality. Leaders of the British production industry today say film-making in this country is not an economic proposition. Indeed, it can never be whilst the present approach persists. Maybe they would be wise to seek the advice of this quiet happy man whose book is in so many ways one of the most important and timely contributions to film literature.

Maligning the Jesuits

Two correspondents have taken objection to the final sentence in the review of *Hell is Sold Out* in the September issue of FOCUS. "V" writes: "I regret that what I thought was a transparently ironical reference to the ancient canard about the Jesuits should be taken seriously and I sincerely apologise to any reader who has misunderstood my jest."

Cover Personality

Jeanne Crain

Three talent scouts in the audience at a Los Angeles repertory theatre on the same evening a Saturday in late 1942, were more interested in a lovely girl in the audience than they were in the actors. The girl was Jeanne Crain and on the following Monday morning she made a screen test for 20th Century-Fox. In record time she became a star.

Jeanne was six months old when her parents went to live in Los Angeles. It was there—at St. Mary's Academy and for a year at Inglewood High School—that Jeanne was educated. In leading roles in one school play after another, Jeanne delighted proud relatives, but was seen by nobody else. At that time she was uncertain as to whether her future lay in becoming an actress or an artist, for she had a flair for drawing.

A friend of the family heard that Max Reinhardt was seeking someone to play the title role in "Song of Bernadette" and Jeanne was promised a test. Meantime, she was given two tickets for a show at the tiny Max Reinhardt Playhouse. That evening three talent scouts saw her, and Ivan Kalm, of 20th Century-Fox, gave her a contract.

Jeanne's only previous experience of films was a test she made for the role of Lucy in the Orson Welles' production of "The Magnificent Ambersons". At the time she was 15 and very nervous. The verdict on the test was that "she had something, in person, which didn't come through on the screen".

After her contract was signed, she was advised to "go on with college for a while". When Darryl Zanuck returned to the studio in 1943, he at once cast her for an important role in "Home in Indiana", in which June Haver was also introduced. From that day forward, she made one successful appearance after another: "In the Meantime, Darling," "State Fair," "Leave her to Heaven".

The simple charm of her screen personality is no "act". One reason

for it may be that she lived, until her marriage to Paul Brinkman, with her family in a modest flat, as she had done during her schooldays.

Her literary and artistic tastes show a bias towards the serious: Chopin and Liszt, Emil Ludwig's biographies and Shakespeare's plays.

Jeanne is a good friend of the Franciscan Fathers in Los Angeles and has appeared several times in "The Hour of St. Francis" programme.

O.C.I.C. Prize Film

The prize offered by the International Catholic Film Office (O.C.I.C.) to the film "which most contributes to spiritual and moral progress" has been awarded to *Journal d'un Curé de Compagne* ("Diary of a Country Priest"), the film directed by Robert Bresson, which succeeds in representing one of the most profound and mysterious of experiences, that of the triumph of grace over human frailty. This it does by expressing in cinematic terms of high artistic quality the essential elements of the work of Georges Bernanos.

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A FILM REVIEW



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NOVEMBER

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(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

Organ of the Catholic Film Institute

Vol. IV

November 1951

No. 11

THE FILM AND THE APOSTOLATE

At the Lay Apostolate Congress recently held in Rome, the Executive Committee of the International Catholic Film Office was present as one of the expert groups on hand to assist the deliberations of the Congressists. It is yet another testimony to the recognition by the Church of the need to integrate competent film action in the life of the Catholic laity. The words of Pius XI written sixteen years ago in the Film Encyclical are more than ever apposite today. He said: "The motion picture should not simply be a means of diversion, a light relaxation to occupy an idle hour; with its magnificent power it can and must be a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good."

All too many people among our prominent leaders of thought fail to recognise the cinema for the power it is. Further, they fail to appreciate the part it could play in helping people to understand the Catholic way of life. Douglas Hyde, writing of his days as Communist organiser, said that more converts to Marxism were made by means of films than by lecturing or reading. The film has an impact upon even the most sophisticated minds that is altogether beyond the power of the press and the radio. It is, therefore, regrettable that few among us as yet realise the power within our grasp.

Not since the invention of the printing press has a comparable power been placed in the hands of man, for good or ill. If we could imagine persons of intelligence and position sneering at the printing press as a machine for publishing novels and romances and quite overlooking the mountains of spiritual, theological, scientific and purely literary works which it has produced, we should have something analogous to the attitude of those who regard the cinema as a machine dedicated solely to the output of meretricious glamour films.

Another point to be considered is that the kind of films we have in mind could not and would not be made by the commercial cinema industry. Films like *Visitation*, *Crucifers to Walsingham*, *Pilgrimage to Fatima*, *The Master Calleth Thee* would not be made at all because the religious organisations sponsoring them simply could not afford the price required. The situation is simply that either such films are made by a dedicated group or not made at all.

It is urgent, therefore, that our leaders give us all the sympathy and understanding possible in our campaign to bring the film within the orbit of the average religious group as a feasible method to be used by them in the Apostolate. We have blessings and good wishes from many, but we need real appreciation of what it is we are trying to do. "They will," in the words of Pius XI, "help to ensure that a great international force—the motion picture—shall be directed towards the noble end of promoting the highest ideals and the truest standards of life."

GOING TO THE FILMS—

*As a Career!**

By

- - - -

C. A. LEJEUNE

"How can I become a film critic?" is a question I get asked again and again in letters. You'd be surprised if you knew the number of frustrated service-men, students, clerks, secretaries and even schoolchildren who are filled with a burning desire to blossom out as reviewers of pictures. Some of them are just ordinary film fans, who go to the pictures two or three times a week, know all the histories of all the film stars, and long to make a profession out of a thing that has always been their hobby. Some of them have been told by their friends that they have "a critical faculty". Some—the more enterprising of them—have made a practice of writing, for their own enjoyment, short personal reviews of all the films they see. These last are the only ones with the smallest chance of ever becoming film critics. And I must emphasise the fact that the chance is *very* small. Old critics, like old soldiers, never seem to die; and if they do, there are always five or six fully-trained journalists ready to step into their shoes. A modern editor hardly ever goes outside the newspaper world for his film critics, and the general practice is to choose somebody from his own staff, or his own newspaper group; perhaps the man who fills in for the regular reviewer when he is away on holiday.

Again, an established critic on a daily newspaper may be asked to review films for a weekly, or a monthly, magazine, as well as for his own paper. Most of us earn our living by writing for three or four different publications, in different styles and sometimes under different names.

This makes things very difficult for the boy or girl who wants to become a film critic, and I shouldn't be fair

if I didn't warn you that only one in a thousand can hope to attain his ambition. But for those who still have their hearts set on the career after this warning, here are a few hints as to how to set about it. Having a rich and benevolent uncle who owns a newspaper is, of course, one way, but even the most benevolent of uncles, if he knows his business, will make short work of a nephew or niece who proves unequal for the job.

The first thing to do is to learn to write; to write to a set length on a specific subject: to write simply, concisely and to get your facts clear. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Writing to an exact length, for instance, is a thing that isn't taught at school. "Write an essay on How I Spent My Holidays," they'll say. Never: "Write about 350 words on 'How I Spent My Holidays'". But that is something you have got to learn if you want to be any kind of journalist. There are just so many inches to be filled in every newspaper, and it is the journalist's duty to fill the exact space allotted to him, never mind how distinguished he may be, nor how important the thing he is reporting. Writing too little is as bad as writing too much.

Try the experiment for yourself, next time you see a film or a play. Come home and write a report of it, giving yourself an allowance of, say, 250 words and keeping as close to that figure as possible. Consider that you are writing the report for the benefit of people who haven't seen the play or picture. You will have to give them the main facts about it: what it's called, where it is, who is in it, what *sort* of film or play it is, roughly what it is about, and finally, what you think of it and why. Then hand it to someone who has not seen that particular film or play, and see if you

* By courtesy of C. A. Lejeune, Film Critic of the *Sunday Observer*, and Basil Clancey, Editor of the *Junior Digest*.

have given him an account that satisfies him. Can you do it? If you can, you have at least the makings of a journalist.

This, of course, is simply an amateur test. If you still want to take up criticism as a career, the next thing is to try to get a job as reporter on a newspaper. You won't find this easy, but don't despise any job that is offered you, however ill-paid or small. Once your foot is inside a newspaper office, you'll really begin to learn. Be prepared to take any sort of assignment and do each one equally conscientiously. Learn to "cover" local fires and bazaars and gymkhanas; to report police-court cases and amateur plays and political meetings. Don't be in too much of a hurry to get your initials at the bottom, or your name at the top of a column.

I've never forgotten a healthy lesson in humility I learnt when I was a very young reporter in Manchester. There were two new plays on the same night, and I was sent, on my first assignment as a reviewer, to cover the less important of them. Back in the office at midnight I handed my proudly-signed notice to our real dramatic critic. "I hope I've said the right things," I stammered to the great man. He gave the copy one hasty glance, and turned away with it. "Don't worry," he said, with what was meant to be real kindness, "when they find *my* initials aren't at the bottom, they won't pay any attention to a word you say."

He was right. "They", meaning the public, don't; but an editor does. By patiently standing in for older writers, doing each job scrupulously, and learning everything that can be learnt from more experienced colleagues, a boy or girl with a real flair for journalism will generally get a footing in the newspaper world. And that, as I told you a few minutes ago, is the only way you will get the chance of becoming a film critic, or indeed any kind of critic.

"How can I become a *good* critic?" is a very much more difficult question to answer. Criticism, you see, is not an exact science; nobody can really teach the way of it. It is a thing that only comes after hard labour and long

practice. It can't be learnt from books, although a regular and careful reading of the best reviewers can be a great help, so long as you study them, not slavishly imitate them.

All criticism, in the end, must be intensely personal—personal opinion, but not personal prejudice. You can never know for certain what your readers are going to like. You must know by experience how hard it is to recommend a book, or a picture, or a play, even to your best friend; so how on earth can a reviewer expect to hit off the exact taste of thousands of strangers?

Get it out of your head that criticism is a matter of being right or wrong. The great thing is to make sure that what you say is right *for you*, that your views are honest and considered ones, not just high-flown writing or showy wisecrack; that you could cross your heart and say, "I truly believe this". The one major sin in criticism is being dishonest with yourself. Nothing—no bribe, no threat, no appeal to sympathy, no cautious, second thought—makes this forgivable.

If you are consistently honest, and the reader gets to know it, it doesn't matter in the least whether he shares your tastes or not. As long as he can say with confidence, "Oh, I *always* agree with So-and-So", or "I *never* agree with So-and-So", he has a reliable guide by which he can choose his films.

So learn to form your own judgments, be prepared to defend them with cogent reasons and don't be upset if other people disagree with you. Learn to write simply and to the required length, and make quite sure that you are accurate in your information. If your memory isn't reliable, don't be ashamed to keep careful notes and files. To be able to lay your hand on information quickly is almost as good as carrying all the information in your head, and very much more practicable.

And always remember that your first duty is to the customer, who has paid you a tremendous compliment when you come to think of it; by putting down his money, even if it's only a penny, to find out what *you* think about a particular entertainment, to read what *you* have to say.

O.C.I.C. IN VENICE, 1951

Three priests were nominated by the Executive Committee of O.C.I.C. and approved by the Vatican Secretariat to act as ecclesiastical advisers to the Catholic Film Office Jury at Venice this year. This is an innovation and allows a greater degree of freedom to the clerics taking part in the Catholic side of the Festival. Hitherto much time was taken up with receptions which one felt in duty bound to attend. This year the Jury itself, composed entirely of laics, were able to fulfil this part of the Festival round leaving the priests time for other and more ecclesiastical contacts.

The three clerics were: Mgr. A. Galetto, General Secretary of the Italian Centro Cinematografico Cattolico; Dr. Charles Reinert, S.J., Director of the Swiss Catholic Film Centre, and the present writer. The Jury consisted of Mlle M. Etchegoyen (Uruguay); Mlle Yv. de Hemptinne (Belgium); MM. B. Rasmussen (Denmark); J-P Tallenay (France) and U. Sciascia (Italy). The gathering was, then, a truly international one, a fact that was not without its effect upon the other participants in the Festival. Indeed, each year this evidence of the Church's international approach and aspect is of considerable propagandist value compared with the often narrowly nationalistic outlook of some groups taking part in this annual shop window for the sale of films.

British critics were not so numerous this year though what we lacked in quantity we certainly made up in quality. Miss Freda Bruce Lockhart and Mr. Campbell Dixon were more than able to hold their own as representative of the best in British Film criticism.

The films shown at the Festival were, on the whole, not so distinguished as in other years. On the other hand, neither were there so many to which objection could be taken on moral grounds. Whether this is a tardy but welcome indication of reform or merely lack of opportunity is not easy to say. Certainly there was nothing to equal the utter decadency of *Manon*, the Grand Prize winner of two years ago. Nor was there evidence that I could discern of the political lobbying that disfigured last

year's effort to choose prize films. True, there was a rumour at the beginning of the Festival that some French producers were accusing the O.C.I.C. of making it impossible for certain films to obtain a dispassionate viewing. If this is the case, it is an unconscious testimony to the influence which Catholic Action is exerting.

The film which was crowned by the Grand Jury (composed this year of Italian journalists) was the Japanese *Rasho-Mon* (In the Forest). This came, I think, as a surprise to many who had canvassed the claims of three American films, *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Ace In The Hole*, and *Fourteen Hours*. Whatever the merits of the Japanese films (and I found it a little difficult to assess them since I had no standard of comparison apart from ordinary cinematographic criteria) this award indicated some independence of mind on the part of the jury against strong pressure from the U.S.A. In view of the fact that the film which received the O.C.I.C. Prize *Journal D'Un Curé De Compagne* (Diary of a Country Priest) also received two other awards—tying for second place with *Ace In The Hole* and a beautiful film made in India with an international cast and a French director—*The River*, it would seem that fear of appearing to crown a religious film deprived the Curé of the greater distinction of the Lion of St. Mark. However, that is but surmise.

British films did not carry off any major awards. *The Lavender Hill Mob* was voted the best script, and *Murder in the Cathedral*, the most distinguished decor.

About *Journal D'Un Curé Compagne*, I shall write elsewhere. For the moment it may be listed as one of several films seen at Venice this year having a distinctly religious theme. *Behold The Man*, though not entered for the Festival was viewed with interest by a number of different nationalities and its form and content eagerly discussed. *Murder in the Cathedral*, produced and directed by George Heollering, with the active collaboration of T. S. Eliot, evidently baffled the Italian audience though many of them told me they had

seen an Italian language version of the play and found it full of interest. The extremely austere visual treatment, the rhythm, slow as the spoken words of the poem, blinded them a little to the very pregnant and apposite argument about the respective rôles of Church and State. The Japanese prizewinner, *Rasho-Mon*, also had a religious theme, basically, for it was a plea to the Japanese to discard their ancient worship of ancestors and personal honour and to accept something approximating to Christian values. A French film, *La Nuit Est Mon Royaume* (Night Is My Kingdom) dealing with the training of the blind, likewise had a religious turn to it. Jean Gabin received the prize as best actor for his part in this film.

The much publicised *Streetcar Named Desire* proved to be somewhat disappointing as a film. Overrated as a theatre piece, it failed to gain anything from its transposition to the screen. Vivien Leigh took the prize for best actress for her study of physical and mental degradation leading to the lunatic asylum, but added little to her reputation for worthwhile performances.

The Catholic contribution to the Festival was focused in the Cinema Mass which the Patriarch of Venice celebrated for the benefit of the Catholics attending the Biennale. His sermon and the reception which His Grace afterwards gave made a great impression. Non-Catholic personalities expressed surprise at the realism of the Church in face of this perplexing medium which the words and the presence of the Patriarch implied. His Grace attended a special showing of *Journal D'Un Curé De Compagne* and discussed its technical merits and its power of transmitting a spiritual experience with warmth and appreciation.

The kindness and understanding of the Patriarch set the seal upon our labours at Venice. Not everyone admits the importance of the work which the O.C.I.C. is doing in thus penetrating the domain of the cinema in action and trying to bring the impact of Christian thought and practice to bear upon it. It is always a consolation to know that at least at H.Q. the work is appreciated. The Vatican's interest in approving our presence at Venice and the Patriarch's hospitality in welcoming us are treasured memories.

JOHN A. V. BURKE.

Catholic Stage Guild

Mr. Ted Kavanagh was the Chairman to a Special Meeting of the Catholic Stage Guild held at Charing Cross Hotel, London, on Sunday, October 21st, after Benediction at Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane. It was the first of a series of such meetings at which it is hoped that well-known professionals of stage and screen will address the members of the Guild. On this occasion Mr. George Wood (better known to the public as Wee Georgie Wood) spoke of his early days on the stage and of the influence on his life made by the visits of the local Catholic priest to the touring companies in which he was engaged. He made a strong appeal to all Catholic members of the entertainment world to join and support the Catholic Stage Guild. All professional members of the various stage, film, radio and variety organisations are eligible. Next ordinary meeting: Corpus Christi Church, Maiden Lane, London, on November 2nd, at 5 p.m. Afterwards at the Green Man, Bedford Street, Strand.

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Whither the Craftsman?

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

We are approaching the end of this Course which, for two years, has sought to present a complete picture of filmdom to enable the student to become fully informed on a most vital subject about which far too little is known. The first year was devoted to an analysis of the industry, revealing methods of costing, distribution, exhibition, governmental stipulations, and how the film world is divided into two unequal parts — Theatrical and Non-Theatrical. We covered, too, audience reaction, the influence of films on adults and children, and provided statistics showing the huge dimensions of the industry throughout the world. Thus our initial approach differed from most discourses on film matters which are usually concerned with surface values studied from a cinema seat.

Fundamental truths, however, can be learnt, we found, only by probing behind the screens. That was why we made no attempt to enter either cinemas or studios to begin with. Having dug down to the roots, we then turned attention to the actual making of films, and now, to summarise the Course and consider its *underlying purpose*, let us share the problems facing the craftsman and the creative artist who are anxious to apply their gifts to the making of films for religious purposes. We find them standing dwarfed by mighty studios, dazzled by the glittering entrances of cinemas, bewildered by commercial stipulations.

Can the craftsman find an outlet for his films in the commercial cinema? No—at least not unless they are entertaining in the accepted sense and we may assume, for the moment, he is not primarily interested in adding to the ceaseless torrent of entertainment films. But assuming he is so skilful that he can combine his spiritual messages with dramatic values to make his films acceptable to cinema audiences. Can he then produce freely,

spending as little money as he wishes (or possesses)? No. There is in force today a Quota Act to guarantee a market for British films in this country containing a "cost clause", which stipulates that the labour costs of a short film must be at least 10s. per foot, and of a feature film, £1 per foot.

Consider the short film. Our craftsman plans, writes and shoots it as economically, ingeniously and artistically as possible. The result is really first class. If it is a one-reel film, 1,000 feet in length, and if it is to qualify as a Quota film, he must have spent £500 on labour costs alone (to which must be added all the other costs of making the film). If his labour costs are less than 10s. per foot, or if he might have managed to make the *entire* film for less than £500, his film will not be registered by the Board of Trade as a Quota subject, and this fact will result in fewer bookings, because exhibitors are not enthusiastic about booking non-Quota films, regardless of their quality. In this way costs are artificially raised owing to the widespread belief that quality depends upon cost, and the "cost clause" is designed to prevent "cheap and nasty" films being produced. Thus, the cheap and brilliant film has little chance of success.

And so our craftsman turns away from the commercial cinema and seeks non-Theatrical 16mm. distribution. Here he finds a highly developed network for circulating films of a specialised nature for all purposes except religion, which has not been catered for systematically in so far as distribution is concerned.

Is then his mission hopeless? By no means, though his task is going to be very hard. In next month's concluding article I will try to help him with his problem of how to project the Christian Way of Life on the screen to the millions in urgent need

of the Message. To project it, moreover, in pure, simple, brave fashion and not watered down or shaped to meet box-office demands. It is a great purpose—maybe the greatest purpose

of all, and the visionary craftsman must be saved from being commercially strangled so that the mighty power of film may be employed to bring the people face to face with religion.

C.F.I. NOTES

From Down Under

We have been very happy during the last six months to have seen a lot of Father F. M. Chamberlin who is National Chaplain to the Australian Young Christian Students and who is in Europe on an extended and, we are sure, very exhausting study tour of Catholic Action. Father Chamberlin came to Lucerne in May to represent the Australian Catholic Film Centre at the O.C.I.C. General Council. He was also at Venice for the Children's Film Congress and in Paris for an Educational Conference on Children and the Cinema. At both of these we were glad to have him representing the C.F.I. Father Chamberlin is an enthusiast for Catholic Film Action. He is the Editor of *Film and You*, the very practical booklet written for Australian youth which has sold over 20,000 copies, and been translated into several other languages, an astonishingly fine result from a comparatively small seed. Father Chamberlin has also made several recordings of talks by well-known personalities in this country for transmission over the Catholic Radio Hour in Australia. It makes us wonder when we are going to catch up with our brothers down under. More power to their elbows!

"Focus" Film Course

The handbook which was published to help as a stimulus to discussion groups talking about films is still not as widely known as it deserves to be. Priced 1s. 6d. it is an inexpensive reference book for those who wish to talk intelligently about the place of the cinema as an industry and an art in the world today. Too many people are ignorant of the background of the

cinema industry and of the part that is played by financial considerations in moulding what Pius XI called "the most powerful means of influencing the masses today". It is little use talking about better films or the needs of censorship if you are unaware of the nature of the gigantic monster which produces the films you condemn. We think that it would be a good thing if every boy and girl in the top forms of our schools should invest in a copy of the Focus Film Course Handbook. Parents and youth leaders willing to help form opinion on the cinema will find this book a useful guide.

Meantime we hope that in other parts of the country interested groups are planning to repeat the lectures which we arranged in London last spring.

Regional Film Groups

Gradually we are learning of the existence of Catholic Film Societies up and down the country. They are all doing excellent work in helping to focus attention in one way or another on Catholic film action. We shall be glad to help in any way possible. Strength comes from unity in these matters.

Low Mass Film Strip

The film strip *Low Mass*, made by John Gillick, S.J., may be obtained from the C.F.I. or from Father Gillick himself at Beaumont College, Old Windsor, Berks. It costs 12s. 6d. plus postage.

**STRIPS ON APPRO
DAWN TRUST
STUDIO - AYLESBURY**

A New Section of the C.F.I. 16mm. at Stratford-on-Avon

An encouraging and very pleasant Conference was held at Soli House, Stratford-on-Avon, during the first week of October. The purpose of the Conference was to examine the possibilities of setting up a practical 16mm. group under the auspices of the C.F.I. It was organised by the Birmingham Archdiocesan Film Group and though the number of those attending was not large, the atmosphere of the meeting was most satisfactory and a great deal of useful exploratory work was accomplished.

Two days were devoted to showing films made by members of the Conference and a wide variety of religious subjects were touched upon in this way, from the excellent film made for the Southwark Rescue Society by Father Francis Young, dealing with Day Nurseries under the charge of the Vincentian Sisters, to the interesting and provocative mime of the Stations of the Cross, made by Father P. Corrigan, with a group of workers against the background of a Midlands factory.

Frank discussion and exchange of ideas followed each projection and if no other object were achieved than this comparison of methods of work, the Conference would have been well worth while. In fact, a very important step in the development of Catholic film action in this country was made. It was decided that a group specially devoted to the production of religious films in 16mm. be set up. In this way, a return has been made to the primary object with which the original Catholic Film Society was started in 1934. Indeed, the link is made more obvious by the fact that Father Francis Young, one of the pioneers of the original group, was elected Chairman of this new section of the C.F.I., and we are glad to be assured of his enthusiasm and experience in the direction of this necessary and inevitable side of Catholic film action.

There must be many Catholics, both clerical and lay, who have more or less

proficiency with a 16mm. movie camera and who have felt at some time or other that if they could exchange ideas and work in co-operation with other Catholics of like mind, something good and useful to the general community would result. We are convinced that the opportunity for this pooling of ideas and experience is now possible under the aegis of our new section and if everybody who knows anybody whom this section would interest will only put us in touch, we shall have a large and representative gathering for the next Conference which we propose to hold during the first week of next March. Persons to whom this applies are invited to write to the Hon. Secretary, Catholic Film Institute, 16mm. Section, 157 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

In the meantime, we shall have the benefit of the advice and co-operation of Andrew Buchanan and other professional technicians in helping to make sure that the work done by the members of the 16mm. section will be up to the highest standard. It may well be that here, at last, is the nucleus of the dedicated group that we have been working for for so long. One thing is clear: whatever work is done in the Catholic name must be of the best quality. This is not to say that fantastic sums must be spent. When Pius XI wrote that "for this purpose they must make use of the technical ability of experts and not permit the waste of effort and money by the employment of amateurs", he was certainly not committing us to the wasteful and astronomical economics of the commercial industry. He was insisting, in accord with the age-old tradition of the Church, that whatever use be made of the arts in the name of the Church, the highest standards alone are satisfactory.

We cannot close our brief account of this Conference without according a warm vote of thanks to Father T. S. Copsey, the organising genius behind

this meeting and the priest responsible for the very special work which is being done for youth in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Many of our readers will have seen the remarkable film, *Rome Pilgrimage*, which Father Copsey, aided by his henchmen, Fathers P. Corrigan and D. Hickling, produced last year. These good priests have coupled their work for youth with an enthusiasm for the medium which most appeals to youth nowadays and if their efforts at practical film-making and showing result, as they seem very likely to do, in the greater appreciation of

the young for the potentialities of the cinema, they will be doubly our benefactors.

It was also comforting to know that, though he was unable to be present at the Conference, it had the backing and approval of His Lordship the Bishop of Soli, Bishop Bright, whose valuable support of all that concerns the welfare of Catholic youth is signalised in the hostel which bears his name, Soli House, and which was our home for the all-too-short period of our sojourn on the banks of the Avon.

J. A. V. B.

Catholic 16mm. Film Users

We are often asked to suggest programmes suitable for children. It is not always easy. Many a film with a "U" certificate from the Censor contains elements that are either beyond the understanding of children or else not desirable for the young to see. There are, however, a number of films made by the Rank Children's Entertainment films group which (although the organisation has now, unfortunately, ceased production) are still available for 16mm. users.

Jean's Plan, running for 33 minutes, tells of a little girl's efforts to recover a stolen necklace. It is full of action by a team of youngsters and grown-ups and has some lovely scenery and shots of life aboard a barge.

Riders of the New Forest, running for 60 minutes, is a pleasant story of children and horses and forest scenery. *Dragon of Pentadragon Castle* tells of a castle that is haunted by a dragon, but it is a little boy who tames the dragon and brings happiness to all and sundry. A most amusing performance is given by little David Hannaford. It runs for 52 minutes. *Circus Boy* is probably better known but is still a favourite with the youngsters, telling of the efforts which a boy makes to overcome his fear. Authentic circus scenes make this a particularly useful film for Christmas programmes. It is 50 minutes long. *Bush Christmas*, too, is now a classic, but not to be overlooked for repeat performances. Children love to see the films they

really like again and again. *The Little Ballerina*, particularly suitable for girls but not by any means exclusively, is a charmingly told story of a girl's adventures as she tries to realise her ambition to become a ballet dancer. There is some lovely dancing in it by Margot Fonteyn.

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O.C.I.C. PRIZE FILM

"JOURNAL D'UN CURE DE COMPAGNE"

(Diary of a Country Priest)

The O.C.I.C. Jury had little trouble in coming to a decision this year at Venice. Though there were several films with spiritual and humanitarian tendencies in competition, only one had those qualities of technical and artistic as well as moral integrity which leave one in no doubt as to the result in a festival. George Bernanos' novel, "Journal D'Un Curé de Compagne", was already a classic. The film which Robert Bresson has made from the novel will also be a classic. That is not to say that it will be popular as, for example, *Monsieur Vincent* was popular. It is far too austere, too much of an essay in mental development, too exacting in the demands it makes of its audience for it ever to be an easy film to see. But if an audience is interested to see a film in which it is evident that director, scriptwriter, actors and cameraman have worked as one closely-knit team to produce what is, in my experience, the first film actually to suggest true spiritual progress, then Bresson's is that film.

To say that it is not easy to look at and understand is only to say that there is much more in it than is apparent at a first viewing. Having seen it three times at the moment of writing I can say that it unfolds itself upon investigation. It is relentless in the attention it demands from the intelligence. It has no softer moments. It moves firmly forward to the inevitable death of the young priest and the brilliant white cross which covers the screen as the film fades out underlines yet more the impression one has already gained that we have attended a fierce sermon on conformity to the pattern of Christ and Him crucified.

The diary is written by a young priest, sent to his first parish, suffering already from an interior malady which makes even more difficult the hard task of penetrating the hard, materialistic

hearts of his peasant congregation. Conscious of his physical and cultural deficiencies, he feels able only to suffer for them and to pray for them as for a dearly beloved one. Actually, the stammering sincerity and intensity of his words, forced from his lips as from a mother bearing her children in pain, bring about the conversion and the implied conversion of even the stoniest of hearts.

To a priest this film is as a retreat; an encouragement and an accusation of febleness in the harvest fields of God. To the laity it should be an inspiration to pray for and love their priests who, basically, are their lovers and shepherds for God's sake.

Bresson, in an interview with our Jury at Venice, said that a film like this can only grow from within. The director cannot force it to take shape other than its own; or if he do so, then it will be an abortion and lack all truth. To this must be added that there is needed a director who is a poet and a man of God. I have every reason to believe that Bresson is both.

J. A. V. B.



The Young Priest Seeks Advice

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

*Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;
C, family audiences; D, particularly for children*

THE MAGIC BOX

Starring: Robert Donat, with Margaret Johnston, Maria Schell and over sixty British stars. **Producer:** Ronald Neame. **Director:** John Boulting. **Distributors:** British Lion. In technicolor. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 118 minutes.

It was to be expected and very proper that the British film industry should make a special contribution to the Festival of Britain. And it is appropriate enough that the subject of such a picture should be the life and labours of William Friese-Greene (Willie to his friends), since, unknown to you and me and the encyclopædia, he was as a matter of history the first to "produce and patent a commercially practical motion-picture camera based on the principles still used today".

The film shows us a man who in his early days looked like a distant relative of Buster Keaton and in the year of his death, 1921, like a twin brother of Mr. Chips. Lovable but unpractical outside the sphere of photography, he was the despair of two successive wives through his forgetfulness and lack of consideration. (He even forgot to turn up to sing a few bars solo when no less a person than Sir Arthur Sullivan came to conduct the Bath Choral Society.)

For me the most memorable moments in the picture were when the incomparable Margaret Rutherford visits a photographer's studio, when Laurence Olivier, in the unusual rôle of a London policeman, sees his first moving picture and when Mr. Friese-

Greene exhorts Lord Beaverbrook and others to realise that unless the cinema grows up with its audience it will destroy itself. (In cynical moments I wonder if the audience is growing up all that fast.)

There was a Council of Management for the film in which K.C.B.s etc., are two a penny. But the result, though qualifying with honours for a *Nihil obstat* as regards faith and morals, seems too often to be on a par with a Theatrical Garden Party or a Green Room Rag.

It is said of Friese-Greene that his story was compounded almost equally of brilliant achievement and abject failure. *The Magic Box* is never an abject failure but, except for brief and rare moments, it never achieves brilliance.

Q.

FLYING LEATHERNECKS

Starring: John Wayne, Robert Ryan, Don Taylor, Janis Carter. **Director:** Nicholas Ray. **Distributors:** R.K.O. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 90 minutes.

This is a picture-epic which records the gore and the glory that surrounded the American Air Force and mud-commandos who operated under fierce orders in the Pacific during the late war.

I was often reminded of firework displays; but, on the whole, this film is exciting and credible. It, at least, should help us to realise that civilisation is, as yet, a very thin veneer.

E.

THE LADY PAYS OFF

Starring: Linda Darnell, Stephen McNally and Gigi Perreau.
Director: Douglas Sirk. **Distributors:** Universal-International.
Certificate: U. **Category:** A.
Running time: 80 minutes.

Here is another fifth-rate film which dubious publicity involving bathing beauties (not to be seen in the version shown to the Press) is intended, presumably, to sell to an otherwise sales-resisting public.

A story in which "the teacher of the year" resents being thought of as maternal and finds herself compelled to tutor the little daughter of a gambler in order to pay off the I.O.U. she has rashly signed is hardly elevating and certainly not entertaining.

Little Gigi Perreau as the child goes through the appropriate routine of tear-jerking gestures expected of a child actress; the remainder of the cast have not to exert themselves unduly. The customary deference to materialistic standards of conduct and the acceptance of lying as a legitimate means to any desired end renders this film no better and no worse than a thousand similar products from the studio assembly line.

V.

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

Starring: Gregory Peck, Susan Hayward, with Raymond Massey, Kieron Moore, James Robertson Justice, Jayne Meadows, John Sutton, Dennis Hoey. **Producer:** Darryl F. Zanuck. **Director:** Henry King. In technicolor.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 116 minutes.

David and Bathsheba was only to be expected after *Samson and Delilah*. But Mr. Zanuck has not played a trump card; he has followed the suit led by Mr. de Mille.

Some Catholics may be mystified when they are told that the story of David and Bathsheba is taken from the Second Book of Samuel. "There is no Book of Samuel in my Bible," they may say, "and no mention of Bathsheba." It should be mentioned that in the Douai version the book in

question is headed "The Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of Kings" and is usually known to Catholics by the latter name. And the Douai version prefers the Greek to the Hebrew form of many names and so uses Bethsabee.

But there is much in the film which will not be found in anyone's Bible. It is quite true that King David first saw Bathsheba (I shall use the names employed in the film) when she was washing, that she had a child by him and that David sent her husband Uriah into the front of a battle so that he should be killed and that David then married Bathsheba and was reproved by Nathan, the prophet. But this discreditable incident is magnified, glamourised and distorted in the film. The bath business is presented modestly enough behind a screen. But whereas Holy Scripture implies a single act of adultery, the picture suggests quite a prolonged and sentimental affair, with David and Bathsheba going out for what was obviously a picnic, though we do not see them eating. (My instinctive thought was: "They must have parked the car somewhere." And sure enough they go back in a chariot.) Bathsheba's only recorded comment on the situation (II Kings xi, 5) was concise and to the point. In the film she has a lot to say, including "Did you really kill Goliath?" (Of course, the encounter with Goliath is shown in a flashback.) In the Bible, David makes Uriah drunk. In the picture he treats him to a performance by a dancing girl which, to put it mildly, is very Oriental. This sequence is quite uncalled for and should be cut. The part of Nathan is well acted by Raymond Massey. But the time of his famous rebuke is transposed and gratuitously associated with popular indignation.

The cinema does not often improve the work of an author when it alters it. The Vatican Council teaches that the books of the Old and New Testament "have God for their author" and many will prefer His version to that "written for the screen by Philip Dunne".

No doubt the Biblical Technical Adviser knows more about the costumes of the period and place than I do, but somehow I did not care for David's pullover with embroidered star. As for

Bathsheba's outfit and general style, I found myself looking, albeit in vain, for a brooch inscribed "Bathie".

The psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd", has been adopted as a Protestant cliché, so we had that (sung by the Hollywood equivalent of the B.B.C. singers) and not the Miserere, traditionally associated with this episode.

When the film was shown to a selected audience consisting of clergymen, with and without moustaches, senior officers of the Salvation Army, myself and a few others, we were told that it was "a film with a message". I am not clear myself what that message is, but I think the great British public will emerge from the cinema with a vague but comforting conviction that if, and when, you commit adultery, God will forgive you if you look like Susan Hayward.

Q.

MR. BELVEDERE RINGS THE BELL

Starring: Clifton Webb, Joanne Dru, Hugh Marlowe, Zero Mostel.
Producer: Andre Hakim.
Director: Henry Koster. **Distributors:** 20th Century-Fox.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.

This time Clifton Webb doesn't ring the bell of any rich and spontaneous laughter. There are, of course, some mild peals of merriment and Clifton Webb has a way with him that is always amusing.

20th Century-Fox seem to have been caught in the web of modern psychology: in this comedy they use the talents of Clifton Webb to preach the doctrine that we are only as old as we feel.

It has been said that this film is in bad taste because it makes fun of old people who live together. But does it make fun of old people? And is it not true that a number of people succumb too quickly to old age? "It is the mind that makes the body sick," Shakespeare has told us.

Nevertheless, I prefer Clifton Webb the comedian to Clifton Webb the preacher.

E.

THE LADY WITH THE LAMP

Starring: Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Gladys Young, Felix Aylmer.
Producer: J. D. Wilcox.
Distributors: British Lion.
Certificate: U. **Category:** B.
Running time: 110 minutes.

This film is neither brilliant nor dull. There is such a twilight quality about it that, although Anna Neagle acts most sincerely and with technical precision and perfection, Florence Nightingale at no time emerges as the clear-cut powerful spiritual leader of thought and action. She is presented as a quiet, sterling, devoted, self-sacrificing Sister who could be any Sister working in any hospital.

The fault lies not in the star, Anna Neagle, but part of the fault lies in the star, Michael Wilding, who is hopelessly miscast as the Rt. Hon. Sidney Herbert. Wilding looks and acts like a very tame butler.

I respectfully suggest that the whole of the fault must be laid at the door of Herbert Wilcox who has attempted something outside the sphere of his own particular genius. Part of genius is (surely) the ability to recognise one's limitations. Wilcox has produced some good, gay, bright, light films such as *Spring in Park Lane*, but the biographical penetration would seem to be outside his sphere.

E.

THE PEOPLE AGAINST O'HARA

Starring: Spencer Tracy, Pat O'Brien, Diana Lynn. An M.-G.-M. Picture. **Producer:** William H. Wright. **Director:** John Sturges.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 103 minutes.

The only people not against O'Hara are his parents and an eminent lawyer, splendidly played by Spencer Tracy, who undertakes to defend the young man on trial for murder. This is a thriller with more than one unusual incident; and though I must confess that I found it somewhat complicated and at certain moments too drawn out, I would class it as being very good of its kind. There is some fine photography and the acting is adequate.

T. C. F.



William Prince, Ralph Clinton, Jose Ferrer

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Starring: José Ferrer, Mala Powers, with William Prince, Morris Carnovsky and Ralph Clinton.
Distributors: United Artists.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 90 minutes approximately.

The Shakespearean fire and dash of this brilliant theatre piece cause one to reflect with astonishment that it is a translation of a French play which was first performed in Paris in 1897. Edmond Rostand, the author, built his work around the French novelist, Savien Cyrano de Bergerac, born at Périgord in Gascony in 1619, who divided his time between literature and fighting and spent two years in the guard. He fought a number of duels to avenge insults about his enormous nose. The contemporary prints show a man with a large nose, but not anywhere near as large as those usually affected by actors on the stage, a fancy observed by José Ferrer in his brilliant characterisation on the screen.

The film, following Rostand very

closely, also keeps close to the stage convention. This is wise, for what we most enjoy is the dialogue and though the camera is able to make occasional excursions in space, Cyrano is an actor's piece and in José Ferrer we have an actor of outstanding ability who never misses a moment of telling phrase, gesture or facial expression. The film exaggerates the absurdities of the stage play, but this does not bother us who are fascinated to watch for once a superb stage performance in close-up.

The remainder of the cast are poor by comparison with Ferrer. The story of the ugly man who loves a beauty and is willing to speak as deputy for a tongue-tied handsome rival is an old one. The handsome rival eventually making way for the ugly hero whom the beauty realises, in this case, too late, she really loves, is also an old resolution of a trite situation, but the film is worth seeing for the sake of Ferrer. Marriage is treated somewhat lightly and the friar who performs the ceremony is rather a figure of fun from the Shakespearean repertory, but this need not disturb the average adult.

ROMMEL — DESERT FOX

Starring: James Mason, Cedric Hardwicke, Jessica Tandy, Leo Carroll. From the book "Rommel", by Desmond Young.

Producer: Nunnally Johnson.

Distributors: 20th Century-Fox.

Certificate: U. **Category:** C.

Running time: 99 minutes.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel is a legend from history today. But he was a legend to the troops on both sides of the firing line long before he died. It is therefore just that he should appear as the hero of this outstanding film. Quite simply told, without undue dramatisation, this is the story of the general who swept the Western Desert so long as his health and supplies lasted. He was a great German war figure of World War II, yet he is portrayed here in his other capacity as well, a human person of deep personality and a happy family life. If there is one criticism of the film, it is that the story begins only, really, at El Alamein, though the prologue is the tale of the thrilling, if unsuccessful, raid on his headquarters before. At any rate, his sweeping victories do not feature. In fact we see the slow eclipse of Rommel, as he is brought more and more into conflict with Hitler. Bitterest personal blow was surely when at the closing phase of the North African Campaign, Hitler told Rommel he had no further interest in the Afrika Corps.

On the Western Front the atmosphere before D-Day is well pictured, especially in the discontent of Von Rundstedt's dry humour . . . "Corporals are always so obstinate, Rommel." The invasion of Normandy is most effective with its many contemporary shots of the landing, and Rommel disgusted by the lack of preparation, doubting Hitler because of his immediate control of affairs, yet as a soldier bound to obey. The final story, so little known to the general public, of Rommel's bid to save Germany by destroying Hitler is moving and yet restrained.

One thing emerges very clearly from Von Rundstedt's words, that the German army considers itself defeated by a Bavarian corporal. Winston Churchill re-echoes his House of Commons tribute to Rommel as an epilogue in these days when "there is so little time for chivalry".

James Mason's Rommel is most convincing and sincere. This film deserves great credit and should be seen as historically sound and at the same time great entertainment.

M.

ACROSS THE WIDE MISSOURI

Starring: Clark Gable, John Hodiak, Maria Marquez, Ricardo Montalban. An M.-G.-M. Picture.

Director: William Wellman.

Certificate: U. **Category:** C.

Running time: 80 minutes approximately.

This technicolored story of trappers and Indians along the banks of the Missouri in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was not shown to the Press. It is always difficult to understand what policy governs these things. The film is an excellent piece of adventure and colour with the magnificent scenery inseparable from such films. There is much interesting information about the ways of Indians and the methods of the trappers. There is a minimum of love-making, a maximum of riding and hunting and a great deal of tension especially when a runaway horse bearing a child, tied papoose fashion, to the saddle, is chased by an Indian intent upon killing it.

The romance is between Clark Gable as the chief trapper and Maria Marquez as an enchanting Indian girl who becomes his wife. She speaks only an Indian dialect throughout the film—an unusual deference to integrity—and is killed before the end of the film. This, I imagine, is not so much an avoidance of the customary "happy ending" as demanded by the taboo against white men being the husbands of coloured wives. The same thing took place in another excellent film dealing with Indian and White relationship, *The Broken Arrow*.

The acting is on a high level throughout. Maria Marquez, particularly, gives a thoughtful performance. John Hodiak, as a Scotsman gone Indian, and Adolph Menjou, as a French scout, give out - of - the - ordinary character studies. Not a great but an entertaining film.

V.



George Colouris Impounds Venus



Glynis Johns, Venus and David Niven

APPOINTMENT WITH VENUS

Starring: David Niven, Glynis Johns, George Colouris, Barry Jones.

Producer: Betty E. Box. **Distrib-**

utors: G.F.D. **Certificate:** U.

Category: C. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

Venus, let it be said, is a cow. But such a cow that the Ministry of Ag. and Fish. (or Agriculture and Fisheries, to strangers) decide to remove her at all costs from the German-occupied Channel Island of Armorel. For the purpose, they pick Major Morland (David Niven), looking dashing in a kilt, and give him A.T.S. girl Nicola Fallaize, who knows the island. In fact, of course, she is sister to the "head man" of the island, the Suzerain. Arrived on the scene of operations, they find the local commander has also fallen for Venus, and is planning to get her away to Germany. Swift action is necessary, and Nicola enlists the aid of her cousin, who as a painter has refused to leave the island or to be

involved in war. He is, however, involved in Venus, and agrees to camouflage another cow to look like her. All goes well until the German commander pats the supposed Venus and clouds of dry distemper rise from her "new look". However, the Navy comes at the right moment and despite the fact that Venus gives birth and delays operations, she is safely lured aboard an M.T.B., which sets off at full speed, chased by an E-boat which has arrived in the harbour. Naturally the E-boat is disposed of by a well-trained depth-charge which waits to go off until the pursuer is passing over.

I thoroughly enjoyed this film, which is amusing and has a certain excitement as well. Initial pictures in the Ministry are typical of what is supposed to (and does?) go on in these offices. The photography is of a peaceful Channel Island, with co-operation by the islanders making a realistic picture of a story so fantastic that you can just relax. At the same time there is a deeper feeling in the quiet resistance which so often occurred in occupied countries. A good afternoon off.

M.

DETECTIVE STORY

Starring: Kirk Douglas, Eleanor Parker, Cathy O'Donnell and William Bendix. **Producer** and **Director:** William Wyler. **Distributors:** Paramount Pictures. **Certificate:** X **Category:** A. **Running time:** 104 minutes.

Those who have read *Les Miserables* will remember that Javert, the police officer, mercilessly hunts down Valjean, the reformed convict, because he feels that he must blot out the criminal record in his family by unremitting devotion to the Law. Detective James McLeod is possessed by the same passion in this film. Because his father was a criminal and sent his mother to an early grave, he wages a relentless war against crime and is without pity even for the first offender whom a humane touch could wean from evil. In hunting down an abortionist he discovers that his wife had had a still-born child before her marriage with him. Fury and rage blind him and his wife leaves him because she knows that he will never be able to forgive her. He eventually dies from wounds inflicted by a prisoner who has overcome his guard. His last words are an act of contrition as he realises on the brink of eternity, the enormity of his sin of pride.

The film is an example of technique at its best. Not a moment or a movement wasted. Though it is obviously based on a play it is packed with motion; the very essence of true cinema. Its dialogue is taut and real. The acting reaches that pitch of intensity which makes one forget that it is acting. Kirk Douglas gives a powerful performance as McLeod: perhaps a little too reminiscent of his recent highly-strung parts in *Champion*, *Man of Music*, or *Ace In The Hole*, but still acceptable and very much above average. Eleanor Parker is appealing as his wife; Cathy O'Donnell, likewise, gives a warm, moving performance as a girl willing to help her boy-friend keep straight if only the police will give him a chance. Fine work also by William Bendix, Horace McMahon as a police lieutenant, and Lee Grant as a shoplifter, and Joseph Wiseman as a cat burglar with a psychological twist.

It should be noted that the film has

an "X" certificate which means it is not suitable for children nor for adults who are unaccustomed to mature thought.

V.

HIGHWAY 301

Starring: Steve Cochran, Virginia Grey and Gaby Andre. A Warner Brothers Picture. **Director:** Andrew Stone. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 80 minutes approximately.

This is a "cops and robbers" story though it is decorated with some documentary-style interpolations from real-life politicians and police. It finishes with the declaration from the police officer in charge of the case that it is useless to be too gentle with criminals; that crime does not pay. In the meantime some very vivid pictures have shown that it does pay, for a time; it also shows how neatly a bank can be robbed by determined gangsters. Before the film has ended, the gang have all been killed, either by the police or by each other. There is a generous allowance of face-slapping and other brutalities. Despite the fact that there are a few moments of breath-taking tension towards the end of the film, it is not the kind that one recommends to people looking for worthwhile entertainment.

V.

HE RAN ALL THE WAY

Starring: John Garfield, Shelley Winters, Wallace Ford. **Producer:** Bob Roberts. **Distributors:** United Artists. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 75 minutes.

This very brutal film has few merits except its new treatment of the gunmen who escape from the police. Nick (John Garfield) panics on a raid, gets his chum killed and kills a cop. He then uses a girl to get him through the cordon, a girl he has picked up in a swimming bath. Taking her home, he proceeds to turn her parents' flat into a hide-out. He holds up the family, keeps one with him all the time as a hostage and generally bullies

mother, father and kid brother. But Peg (Shelley Winters) loves him, backs him, wants to help him escape. She buys a car with his stolen money, and despite the threats by her father says she will go with him. But in the end, his selfish fear makes Nick use her as a shield, she shoots Nick, who collapses dramatically in front of the car which should have driven them to safety.

The only really Christian sentiment is expressed by Peg's father, who explains that his wife from her church-going learns the true meaning of love. You certainly would not do the same from seeing this film.

M.

THE FIRST LEGION

Starring: Charles Boyer, with William Demarest, Lyle Bettger, Walter Hampden, Barbara Rush, Wesley Addy, H. B. Warner, Leo G. Carroll. **Producer and Director:** Douglas Sirk. **Distributors:** United Artists. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 85 minutes.

The First Legion is none other than the Society of Jesus, and the great lover, following the track beaten by two famous crooners, now plays the part of a priest with no less, if no greater, success. The story is of an alleged miracle and its consequences in a Jesuit College, the alumni of which, described as novices, seem to be more like scholastics. A distinguished Jesuit, who saw the film, said that he enjoyed it because it was so unlike anything he was accustomed to. In spite of a technical adviser, a priest of Loyola University, the picture fails, he thought, not only in accuracy of detail but also in its attempt to suggest the ethos of the Society in America.

In endeavouring to assess the value of the film I will begin with some of its defects. The first point (if I may borrow an Ignation phrase) is the conflict in the mind of a young Fr. Fulton, who is on the point of leaving the Society without a dispensation. This is dealt with exclusively in terms of "finding peace", "belonging", etc. Broken vows, shirked duties and

undischarged commitments count for nothing. Fr. Fulton is a musician and perhaps it is characteristic that his musical ideal is Grieg's pianoforte concerto, a superficially attractive but not very profound composition. An apparent miracle restrains him. (What he really needed was a kick in the appropriate part of his cassock.)

Then there is our old friend, the seal of confession. The confession in question is explicitly not with a view to absolution. Therefore the seal does not bind, and this is mentioned. But the person making it requires the priest to treat it as equally secret. The priest refers to the matter some time afterwards when he is alone with the person who confided in him. This is liable to give the entirely false impression that a confessor is entitled to refer to a confessional matter to a penitent outside confession, provided he supposes that they are alone.

The introduction of a love interest between a doctor and a crippled girl was artistically defensible and commercially prudent, but the conventional and almost simpering glamour injected into the film in this connection is out of key.

More commendable is the shrewd



Fr. Boyer and the Agnostic Doctor

observation of certain aspects of the faithful in bulk and the commercialism which is the parasite of their devotion. And commendable for the most part is a clever study by Walter Demarest of a Monsignor, with his kind heart and anti-Jesuit banter. But I think he had forgotten the precision of his theology when he announced that God's love is a miracle.

A priest's training and experience give him an advantage when he reviews a "secular" or "profane" film; he has the yardstick of clear principle by which to judge it. But paradoxically he is at a disadvantage in the case of a "religious" film like this. The familiarity of the expert makes it difficult for him to make the mental adjustment necessary if he is to put himself in the place of the average filmgoer in this country. This picture is intended to have a popular appeal and will be seen by thousands who not only know nothing about the Catholic Religion or the Religious Orders, but think they know a lot, for in no other sphere is abysmal ignorance so bolstered by confident and complacent misconception. Whatever its limitations, this film is much nearer to reality than the fantastic notions of many who will see it. It is a corrective to the idea that members of Religious Orders must all lack vitality, humanity and humour. It makes a point of distinguishing between cures of nervous conditions due to suggestion and the rapid healing of an organic defect which medical science cannot explain. *And the latter, a true miracle, takes place.* And with wholesome irony the film portrays an agnostic doctor telling lies in order to propagate a *false* miracle and seeking to prevent a Jesuit from exposing the fraud.

I hope that what I have written will enable me to plead not guilty to the charge of uncritical eulogy of a picture merely because it is about priests and miracles. And I could enlarge upon opportunities missed and emphasis misdirected. I know that the film is not a great work of art. (If it were, far fewer people would go to see it.) But the laity sometimes tell us that there is too much scolding and too little encouragement in the Catholic pulpit. And I think I have detected a slight echo of a similar sentiment in Wardour Street. So let us not be too harsh

with those who here forsake the themes of boy-meets-girl and cop-chases-robber for something which transcends their usual sphere. They have really tried to treat a Catholic subject sympathetically and what might seem to us so easy will have been quite an undertaking. I haven't the heart to look this gift horse in the mouth with too stony a stare. Let us give the industry its due.

Q.

I WAS A COMMUNIST SPY FOR THE F.B.I.

Starring: Frank Lovejoy, Dorothy Hart, Philip Carey, Konstantine Shayne and Roy Roberts.

Director: Gordon Douglas.

Distributors: Warner Brothers.

Certificate: A. **Category:** A.

Running time: 82 minutes.

The purpose of this film, which is to reveal the inherent evil of Communism, is (of course) excellent and praise-worthy; but I venture to suggest that its mode of attack is much too aggressive. Communism is too subtle, the real thing is much too intelligent a philosophy to be treated with sledge hammer tactics. Maybe this sort of shock treatment gets across in America, but it only makes Britishers cross or embarrassed. I suggest that there are only two ways to fight Communism by the medium of the cinema—by making really intelligent documentaries or by satire. All heretics and heresies quail before satire.

This film excites the nerves, it has all the verve of a Warner thriller, but it makes little appeal to one's intelligence. Some of the shooting scenes are overdone; in fact they are boyish. Lovejoy, who is in the party to destroy the party, is credible and acts well. Dorothy Hart, who plays Eve Merrick is also very good.

It is a pity that the approach is so clumsy. All modern crusaders who have the courage to fight Communism should remember Our Lord's words to his disciples, "Be ye as wise as serpents and as simple as doves." This film lacks wisdom and simplicity.

E.

CONTINENTAL FILMS

MEURTRES

Starring: Fernandel, Raymond Suplex, Jacques Varennes. **Director:** Richard Potier. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 120 minutes.*

I would say that this film is remarkable for its brilliant acting, but for little else. It is a story of mercy killing which begins by leading you to think that you are going to hear some clear and courageous thinking about this present and prevalent trend. Noel, who gives his suffering wife a fatal injection, knows that he has done wrong, so much so that he determines to "give himself up". His ambitious brothers who have become professional business men and live for ribbons and decorations are determined that their "chances" shall not be spoiled by such a scandal; they even get their brother put away as a mental case to save the purity of their *social* name.

There are two problems in this film: Mercy Killing and Social Snobbery. They bump into one another in such a way that you have no clear idea what the film is trying to say. And surely, clarity and coherence are primary requisites of any film.

F.

LA BELLE QUE VOILA

Starring: Michele Morgan, Henry Vidal, Ludmilla Tcherina and Gerard Cury. **Director:** Jean-Paul Le Chanois. **Distributors:** Studio One, Ltd. *Certificate: A. Category: A. Running time: 116 minutes.*

French films are not all masterpieces. Here is one that ranks average Hollywood melodrama about a budding ballerina who is shot by her jealous lover and then defies medical advice about the risk to her heart; forces herself to the top of her profession in order to win a free pardon for the imprisoned lover only to die in his arms on the day of his release.

Michele Morgan repeats her somewhat stereotyped performance of pathetic loveliness. She also dances sufficiently well to make it amusing

trying to decide exactly where the real ballerina takes over. Henry Vidal as the lover is gloomy enough to have committed the crime he is charged with. Tcherina dances, in her own right, beautifully as ever and plays the rôle of the favourite whose place Michele Morgan usurps.

It is a pity that the suggestion is allowed by implication that to be a successful ballerina one has to defy the laws of morality. The life is too exacting in fact for many to survive the exotic existence here depicted.

V.

JUSTICE EST FAITE

(Justice Has Been Done)

Starring: Balpétre, Claude Nollier, Michel Auclair, etc. **Director:** Andre Cayatte. **Distributors:** Archway Films Ltd. *Certificate: X. Category: A. Running time: 110 minutes approx.*

This is one of two films, given awards at last year's Venice Festival, which have been the subject of much debate and controversy. The other film was *Dieu A Besoin Des Hommes*, which received the O.C.I.C. Prize. Both films present problems to be considered by the audience. Both leave something to be desired from the point of view of clarity as to the thesis proposed. Both make great demands and seem to require a maturity of judgment not often found in the average cinema-goer.

Andre Cayatte, the director, himself once a barrister, has deliberately set a problem about the possibility of justice not being done in a court of law. It appears to be a plea not only against capital punishment but even, taken logically, against retributive justice itself. He has chosen euthanasia as the crime to be judged, thereby blurring the edges of sentiment even more than would be the case with another less emotionally-pregnant charge.

A brilliant woman physician has taken the life of another doctor, at his own request, to end his sufferings from cancer. The jury consists of an avaricious peasant, a very level-headed waiter, a printer who is a devout Catholic, a retired Major with pronounced military ideas of discipline, a worldly-minded gentleman-farmer, a middle-aged builder who, though married, is attracted to the other

member of the jury, a widow who still retains some of her youthful charms.

We are shown each of the jurors in turn and learn something of their private lives and the personal problems weighing upon them and we are invited to believe that in arriving at their verdict they attribute to the accused the motives they themselves would have had in similar circumstances. The implication seems to be, in the words of the director, that "in judging others, each one of us judge ourselves", and that therefore, since our own opinions vary from time to time, we are not qualified to form judgment on other people at all.

This, of course, simplifies the matter far too much. The normal person who accepts the weighty duty of serving on a jury makes every effort to think and judge impartially. Whatever his personal code of behaviour may be, he has at least an idea of generally accepted morality which he applies as best he can to the case in hand. The fact is that people usually know quite well what ought to be done even if they

find excuses for themselves for not living up to the moral standard. The film shows the printer being told by his priest that euthanasia is wrong and that the accused is therefore guilty. The peasant suspects his young wife of infidelity, he therefore condemns the accused. The major regards the accused as a foreigner and therefore suspect, etc., etc.

The film is brilliantly made and the acting, by a cast of capable if not well known players, of a high order. In spite of the fact that most of the action takes place in court and is therefore very wordy, the camera is not static and one has the impression of an intelligent approach to a script which, dealing so largely with mental conflicts, might easily have baffled the motion-picture maker.

Catholics know that euthanasia is a crime and do not need to be told that human justice is not perfect, but they also know that, having due regard for human frailty, justice can be and generally is done.

V.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (Vol. IV, Nos. 9 and 10)

<i>An American in Paris</i>	(B)	(278)	<i>Love Happy</i>	(A)	(259)
<i>As Young As You Feel</i>		(257)	<i>Man in the White Suit,</i>		
<i>Cattle Drive</i>	(D)	(263)	<i>The</i>	(C)	(253)
<i>Chicago Masquerade</i>	(A)	(260)	<i>Murder Inc.</i>	(A)	(279)
<i>Dear Brat</i>		(255)	<i>No Highway</i>	(C)	(257)
<i>Decision Before Dawn</i>	(A)	(278)	<i>No Resting Place</i>	(A)	(256)
<i>Francis Goes to the Races</i>		(276)	<i>People Will Talk</i>	(A)	(275)
<i>Golden Horde, The</i>	(A)	(262)	<i>Phantom Horseman, The</i>	(C)	(258)
<i>Half Angel</i>	(B)	(263)	<i>Prince who was a Thief,</i>		
<i>Hell is Sold Out</i>	(A)	(254)	<i>The</i>	(C)	(261)
<i>Here Comes the Groom</i>	(B)	(256)	<i>Queen of the West</i>	(C)	(276)
<i>His Kind of Woman</i>	(A)	(279)	<i>Red Mountain</i>	(B)	(261)
<i>Last Outpost, The</i>	(B)	(259)	<i>Rhubarb</i>	(B)	(276)
<i>Law and the Lady, The</i>	(A)	(262)	<i>Rich, Young and Pretty</i>	(B)	(258)
<i>Life in Her Hands</i>	(A)	(260)	<i>Soldiers Three</i>	(B)	(277)
			<i>Sound of Fury, The</i>	(A)	(254)
			<i>Strangers on a Train</i>	(A)	(255)
			<i>Talk of a Million</i>	(B)	(259)
			<i>The Frogmen</i>	(B)	(274)
			<i>Valentino</i>	(A)	(274)
			<i>Valley of Eagles</i>	(B)	(277)
			<i>When I Grow Up</i>	(C)	(261)
			<i>When Worlds Collide</i>	(A)	(277)
			<i>Wherever She Goes</i>	(C)	(260)
			<i>Worm's Eye View</i>	(B)	(258)

COVER PERSONALITY

DULCIE GRAY

Dulcie Gray was one of the British stars to be seen acting as hostess to the British Film Producers' Reception at the Hotel Des Baines at the Venice Film Festival. In spite of the heat and the crowd she managed to move calmly about the room with a word and a smile for everybody. Memories of other such receptions leave me with a picture of sub-royalties graciously receiving their subject fans with a series of set phrases carefully rehearsed. Not so Miss Gray. There seemed to be no end to the topics of conversation she was prepared to join and take up at a moment's notice with whatever group she happened to encounter. It must have been a good thing from the point of view of British film prestige that so intelligent and charming a personality should be our ambassadress.

Graham Greene was the topic of conversation she bumped into in our group and she spoke with great warmth of her part as "Rosie" in the stage version of *Brighton Rock*. Within a few minutes, with Graham Greene as bait, we were discussing faith and morals and art and philosophy and the

difference between acting for the stage and the screen and whether spiritual integrity is necessary in order to be able to express spiritual development on the stage or screen. Unfortunately, the claims of hospitality cut short this most intriguing of conversations and I was left with the promise that at some other time and place we might take up the threads.

Her career has been a full one. Films like *Madonna of the Seven Moons*, *2,000 Women*, *They Were Sisters*, *A Man About the House* and *Mine Own Executioner* have given her an opportunity to show her versatility, though it must be owned that producers have not always been as attentive to her talents as they might have been.

She has managed to appear a number of times with her husband, Michael Denison, both on stage and screen. *The Glass Mountain*, *The Franchise Affair* and her new film, *Angels One Five*, are films in which she has partnered him. Long may they reign, both together and singly, for they give a great deal of pleasure to a great many people.

JOHN VINCENT.

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FOCUS

A FILM REVIEW



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THE CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

National Film Reviewing Office

(Affiliated with *Office Catholique International du Cinema*)

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1. *To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.*
2. *To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.*
3. *To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.*
4. *To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.*
5. *To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.*
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FOCUS: A FILM REVIEW

Organ of the Catholic Film Institute

Vol. IV

December 1951

No. 12

Christmas and the Cinema

"And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them and the brightness of God stood round about them . . . and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying: Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill."

It is part of the policy of this magazine to focus attention on the vast possibilities which the cinema offers to those who are anxious to bring to the multitudes who sit in the shadows of darkness, the riches of the Christian religion, through the modern medium of light and sound.

In the past painters, particularly Botticelli, Rembrandt, Hugo Van Der Goes, re-created in their own medium the glory of the Incarnation. Is not the time ripe for cineastes to re-create in the modern medium of light and sound the startling story and message of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who called Himself the Light of the World?

Triptych (see article on pages 324 and 325) has evoked the spirit of Christmas in a moving and artistic manner. Is it too much to hope that in the near future some courageous film artist will create a full length film of the Nativity?

This is the appropriate month to thank all those who have given their time and talents to this magazine and to the work of the Catholic Film Institute. We cannot thank them adequately, but such work will reap its own rewards.

Focus is now four years of age. We think it deserves a new overcoat. We hope that its new cover will attract new friends.

My very best wishes for a very happy Christmas.

EDITOR.

The Birmingham Catholic Film Unit

A Working Proposition

By - - - T. S. COPSEY

We began with a flourish four years ago : a big audience; a talk from Fr. Burke; "Family Affair", by Mr. Alan Turner; and a practical demonstration of equipment from Mr. Ellis, of Substandard Films. Then we came to earth. Within six months we had learnt that film discussion needs films to discuss; that no professional could be expected to do our work for us; and that we had got to get down to it ourselves.

Starting a Film Unit

With the blessing of the Diocesan Youth Council we formed a working unit of four. We chose 16mm. as the only practical medium for public showing. Then came the problem of equipment. We decided that though we would work closely together as one unit, it would be better all round if each of us somehow "acquired" his own projection unit and, if possible, a camera. The Council would loan us the cost of buying film and having copies made. We were to pay it back from takings.

It sounds improbable but it works admirably. The Film Unit as such, owns no equipment; its only property is films. This meant we started off with no heavy capital debt. If people were really keen to come in they would get hold of a projection unit somehow. (And if they were not keen we didn't want them.) Owning our own projectors and cameras gave us all practical experience and a healthy competition. And it was hoped that all four of us (we soon became five : four priests, one layman) would eventually make up four complete separate showing sections in different parts of the Diocese.

And so it turned out. We now have five projectors : all 16mm., sound and silent, secondhand, ranging from £90 to £125 each. We have four cameras : a Kodak B, 100 ft., 3.5 fixed focus; a Victor No. 3, 100 ft., 3.5; a C.I.G., 50 ft., telephoto; and a C.I.G., 100 ft., three turret lens; prices ranged from £20 to £120. We are all five fortunately endowed with cars and thus have a circuit of five mobile sections working from Leamington, Stratford, Birmingham (2) and the Potteries. The Chairman, Fr. P. Corrigan, holds all films and all bookings are made only through him. He then informs the appropriate section and sends the required films. All takings and films are sent back immediately to him and he pays out travelling expenses.

Catholic Job of Work

These details may seem too domestic to matter. In fact, however, they have an extremely practical and important bearing. A film unit has got to choose between confining itself to a small coterie with a private hobby, or doing a real Catholic and public job of work. Briefly, no unit can last without high standards : high standards in films are expensive; expenses can best be covered not by donations or begging, nor by hiring expensive halls, but by giving as many shows as possible in small halls and huts to modest audiences all over the Diocese. And that can best be done by working together to make the actual film and then dividing the work of showing it among a number of mobile projectors. A paying, working unit must give an average of two shows a week over a wide area throughout the year. No single projector team has time for that,

In other words, you have not only to make your film, but, and many units fail here, you have then to create your own circuit in order to get back enough money to pay for the film and make another one to take round next time. Hiring is very slow and often risky. You can't afford serious damage or poor projection. It is far more effective to push round yourself and show the film personally. This gives a real opportunity to talk on the Film Apostolate in general and your own efforts in particular. It stirs up far more interest in the film. It also brings in a bigger collection. All collections count, and ours count both ways. We now offer to go anywhere in the Diocese and put on a show of two hours for £5. If the parish or club has any wits it can easily double that amount and keep the extra £5 for its own funds. They then ask you to come again.

Making Films

"But what about actually making films? Our first efforts were as bad as any other beginners. We view them with horror. But they had one feature that saved us financially. They were simple documentaries of parish or diocesan events with a strong local interest. And audiences were quite keen to pay for the sheer interest of seeing themselves or their friends on the screen. We began therefore with a kind of Diocesan News Reel of ten or twelve events, covering a wide range of interest with a strong local flavour. We have now five of them, each of 20 minutes and they are still popular.

We then tried longer films covering a single event: a 40 minute one on the Walsingham Pilgrimage; a 30 minute one on Catholic Scout Training; a 30 minute one on the Rosary Mime at the Diocesan Celebrations, and so on. We were now experimenting with two and even three cameras at once and doing all our own editing and titling.

Our Big Opportunity

The big opportunity came in our third year. A large Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome. We went all out. We had accumulated 2,500 feet of Kodachrome and kept to a flexible but carefully dovetailed script for all four cameras. The results surprised us. Within six

months we had shown it to over 16,000 people at audiences generally ranging from 100 to 150: this meant some 78 showings between November and March. The cost of the film, with two colour copies was £200, and in six months we had more than covered it. This year's Lourdes Film (1,600 ft. Kodachrome) promises an equal success.

The Rome film brought our next practical problem—that of sound. Hitherto we had been content with microphone and gramophone commentary. We now tackled an emitaape recorder with music and commentary supplied by ourselves to synchronise with the film. They are expensive (even if you make your own) and tricky to work. But they add immeasurably to the film and work out much cheaper than a sound track, with its rate of £10 a 100 ft. After the initial outlay £5 will give a complete permanent sound recording that runs for an hour. We have two machines, one bought and one home made and find them invaluable.

Keeping Within Our Limits

One last point. We have made no mention of creative in contrast with documentary work. Like all other film units we are dying to vie with Eisenstein or Jean Cocteau. But we decided to gang warily at first, to start modestly and keep well within our limits and means. We have already attempted a Stations of the Cross performed by our youth and have detailed scripts for a film on Training for the Priesthood and two others on the Sacraments. And we have a lovely dream of a big film to be called "City Parish".

But the point of this article is not to push ourselves or exploit future plans. We have simply given our own experiences in the light of the past 4 years in the hopes that others will see that a Catholic Film Unit can be a practical proposition. Provided it keeps within its own limits and is ready to work hard in giving shows to many modest audiences in small halls, then it can be not only practical but in the long run, even profitable. And there is no better way of arousing a real interest in Catholic Films and an awakening of conscience in regard to the ordinary cinema.

Catholic 16mm. User and Enthusiast

We are able this month to mention two films which are additions to our list of specifically Catholic efforts and which, though modest in intention, will give great pleasure to numbers of people. Fr. F. E. Young, Chairman of the 16mm. Section, is the maker of a charming, one reeler, black and white silent film entitled *Safe In His Own Home*. This was made for the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society and deals with the Holy Child Nursery under the Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood. We see a mother bringing her little baby to be cared for by the Sisters and from then on we see everything that can happen to a baby in the course of a day; being washed, fed, getting into mischief and finally getting down to sleep. The photography is charming and imaginative and with the lovely close-ups of enchanting babies, a certain winner for all ages of baby worshippers. The film is 15 minutes in running time and the hiring fee is 5s.

For Convent Schools

Another film which will be of particular interest to convent schools is *The Hound of Heaven*, a news-reel compilation of the Centenary Celebrations of the Assumption Convent, Richmond, Yorks. The children gave a performance of *The Hound of Heaven* for which they were trained by Miss Beryl Cooke and we see the children and their teachers busily gathering together the necessary properties for the play, we see the rehearsals and part of the open-air performance and finally the audience gathering for the show at a local cinema. The film is unpretentious but its colouring is attractive and is of interest in suggesting what might be done on another similar occasion if a little more elaborate thought and planning could be indulged. The hiring fee is 7s. 6d. and the running time is fifteen minutes.

There are several films from the

commercial list which will be of interest to the programme planner who is looking for a show which is primarily entertaining.

Fine Selection

Last Days of Dolwyn, 95 minutes running time, tells of the Welsh village which is submerged to make a waterway to Lancashire and of the resistance of the villagers. There are delightful performances from most of the cast, especially from Edith Evans and Emlyn Williams. *Happiest Days of Your Life*, 81 minutes, is a lively comedy of war-time school life with amusing characters played by Alastair Sim, Margaret Rutherford and Joyce Grenfell. A more sophisticated drama is *Man About the House*, 93 minutes, with Margaret Johnson, Dulcie Gray and Kieron Moore, telling of two spinsters on an estate in Italy who are victimised by the major-domo. The photography is fine and the piece de resistance is the grape-harvesting scene. *State Secret*, 104 minutes running time, is Sidney Gilliat's exciting manhunt story of a Tito-like dictatorship with excellent work from Glynis Johns, Douglas Fairbanks and Jack Hawkins. Another thriller is *The Woman in Question*, 88 minutes running time, directed by Anthony Asquith, with Jean Kent and Dirk Bogarde in which the story is told from the point of view of witnesses, each seeing things from his own point of view.



End of the Beginning

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

Here is the last chapter of the Course. From now on the religious film craftsman will proceed, I hope, both to practise his art, and infect others with his enthusiasm.

I can best conclude by trying to remove from his mind any feeling of frustration regarding inadequate outlets for the films he plans to make, created on the one hand by commercial barriers described earlier, and on the other by undeveloped distribution channels within the Church. These combine to place him in a quandary, for despite his skill and determination to devote his talents to producing films of real religious significance, purely as a labour of love, he cannot discover just how they are going to be circulated to maximum audiences. Making films is difficult, but finding ways of distributing them apart from commercial cinemas is more difficult still.

Now the line of action regarding both production and distribution depends, of course, on the extent of the craftsman's experience. If he has already mastered the writing of scripts, the camera, editing and studied direction, he will either be working alone, or with one of the many excellent amateur producing clubs. If in the latter way, he will have discovered that few if any of such clubs are interested in making religious films, being content to produce technically ingenious but spiritually unimportant subjects. That policy is admirable as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. If the craftsman can induce his experienced amateur friends to devote just a little of their time and talent to making films that *matter*, he will be doing a great service to the community. If he cannot, then two courses lay open. Either he must work alone, or establish a unit himself through his Church, and I recommend him to do the latter, gathering together all those, skilled and unskilled, who are prepared to devote their spare time to the job. The best craftsman is he who, though a specialist in one

particular branch, has mastered all the other branches of his art. Therein lies the difference between craftsman and technician.

Today, many books are available, teaching every branch of film-making, and the craftsman-unit-promoter should set about establishing a library, available to all members, and this, in conjunction with a well-organised and continuous series of lectures, discussions and demonstrations based on this Course, will set the unit in motion. Next, he should take a census of equipment in his area. It is surprising how many cameras, lamps and other apparatus lie about, sometimes unused. Arrangements should be made to pool what is available, and to hire what is not. The basic cost of film-making is film stock. All else, bar the processing of exposed negative, should be done by the unit, thereby reducing expenses to a minimum. The technical chapters of the Course have described the right approach in considerable detail.

Finally, to overcome, as far as possible, the problem of inadequate distribution, the craftsman-promoter should register full details of his activities with the Catholic Film Institute in London. This is the hub, the guiding force for all new craftsmen-units. The Institute will welcome details of progress, plans, and completed films. If results are as excellent as they should be, I am sure the Institute can arrange for such films to reach interested bodies in various parts of the country.

I have very great faith in the success of these proposed units. Under inspired leadership they can assume universal importance, and make contributions to the Church in film form which are not possible by commercial methods.

In a sentence, the fundamental purpose of this Course is to appeal for a revival in the spirit of craftsmanship applied to religious film-making.

My part is more or less done. It is

for the craftsman to take over, but I should like to give evidence of my faith in him, wherever he may be, by offering a prize, in a year's time, for the best religious film of a factual nature, made by a craftsman unit, or lone worker. I trust, therefore, that all interested will keep the Institute advised during the coming year of their

activities, for the prize-winning film together with all others submitted which deserve prominence, will surely be seen by many people, thus adding further strength to the movement as a whole.

From now on, faith in the future means faith in the religious craftsman.

Good-bye and good luck.

Our New Chairman

His Eminence Cardinal Griffin has been pleased to approve the nomination of Mgr. Thomas Croft Fraser as Chairman of the Catholic Film Institute, to succeed the Very Rev. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., who resigned in June last.

Mgr. Croft Fraser was born in London; his father was the Rev. Thomas Denman Croft, sometime Vicar of Kimpton, Herts., his mother Eleanor Fraser Tomlinson, daughter of the Right Rev. George Tomlinson, first Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar. Through his maternal great-uncle, Colonel Frederick Mackenzie Fraser he inherited the estates of Castle Fraser and Inverlochy in Aberdeenshire, and assumed the additional surname of Fraser in 1906. He was educated at Radley and later studied the organ at Trinity College of Music, London, under the late Mr. Edward d'Evry, organist of the London Oratory, which was the church of his predilection from the time of his conversion to the Catholic Church in 1912. During the first world war he was employed at the Foreign Office. In 1921 he went to Rome where he became a Benedictine Oblate and subsequently studied for the priesthood at the Abbeys of St.-Paul's-outside-the-Walls and Cesena, near Ravenna, and was ordained at the latter in 1927. In 1929 he was appointed Choir Sacristan of St. Peter's Basilica at Rome and two years later was made a Beneficed Clerk and Assistant Master of Ceremonies. He succeeded to the post of Master of Ceremonies in 1935 and was created Privy Chamberlain in 1939. During the war he was resident in Switzerland. In 1946 he resigned his benefice at St. Peter's and returned to England after an absence of nearly 25 years. At the Centenary Congress last

year he was a member of the Liturgical Committee and assisted Mgr. Collings in the direction of the ceremonies.

He has had a deep interest in the drama and the potentialities of the screen for a number of years and he has been one of the reviewers for Focus for some time. We are certain that his wide interests and experience will prove of the greatest value in directing the affairs of the Catholic Film Institute and we regard ourselves as fortunate in having his services at our disposal.

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THESE ARE THE STARS*

Being some observations on Vocation

By - - - - BING CROSBY

In the movie business we have lots of fun pretending we're soldiers of fortune or masters of high adventure. It's fun doing it, and it's fun knowing that we're helping other people to get a laugh or a bit of relief from the worry and care of everyday life. Of course we get paid for it—and that adds to the fun somewhat, too. But when the studio day is ended, we go to our homes and we are just ourselves—no more adventure except when we trip on junior's roller skates or smell the toast burning or write to that man who wants to know how we're getting along on or about the 15th of the month.

There are some people in this world who are playing all the time at high adventure and who never step out of their rôles day or night. But the funny thing about them is that they don't seem to realise what heroes they are. We play them in the movies once in a while. They're the Father O'Malleys and the Sister Benedicts and the Brothers whom Hollywood writers frequently don't bother to name. They are the people whose lives are filled with real drama. Day after day the padre goes along, straightening out the lives of others who have gotten into tangles of one sort or another. Day after day the Sister or the Brother works patiently, shaping the characters of girls and boys who will be mainstays of this good American way of life of ours, which is founded on a belief in God. Look at any American coin—"In God We Trust".

The priests and the Religious are the real makers of history. The rest of us run a business and make some money, and after a little while we're gone, and the money's gone. But they are building kingdoms of spiritual values, that are going to influence and rule generations years and years away.

Of course, we've each got our little spot in this big movie of life, and the trick is to play our part the way the

Great Director wants it played. Most of us are spotted to places like mine—with a bunch of youngsters and a good wife at home to provide for. But some of us can move up into really stellar rôles, if we answer the call when the Great Director goes about casting. The important thing is to have studied our abilities and to know whether or not we can play the rôles when they are opened to us.

For me—I envy the boy who gets cast for life as a Father O'Malley and the girl who gets called up for lifelong starring as a Sister Benedict. In my book, they are the ones whose names are going to stand first on the programme, spelled out in capital letters and in good black type. In my book, these are the stars.

In Hollywood, the actors have agents who remind the directors and producers about their talents and ambitions. Well, there are ways to get in line for the big rôles in the real-life drama I have just been describing. There are people you can pray to, and you can do a lot to get yourself in shape for the part you'd like to play. In real life, it takes a smart fellow to be a Father O'Malley—you'll notice I said in *real* life—and it takes a girl who has *everything* to be a good Sister.

The world needs a lot of padres and Religious right now. The world needs them for the good they can do and for the example they can give of that spirit we call the Christian spirit. In the long view of our times, there will be more glory attached to the memory of the padre and the teacher than to the memories of a lot of generals.

When a movie director deals with the character of a priest or a Religious in the motion-picture drama and he builds up the character into something heroic, he never needs to worry about acknowledgments to real-life people. He knows that any resemblance of such movie characters to thousands of priests and Brothers and Sisters now living is strictly *not* a mere matter of coincidence.

* With acknowledgments to *The Shield*, published by the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, U.S.A., Cincinnati, Ohio.

FILM REVIEWS

By our Panel of Priests

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents;

C, family audiences; D, particularly for children

HIGH TREASON

Starring: Liam Redmond, Andre Morell, Kenneth Griffith, Mary Morris, Dora Bryan, Joan Hickson, Patric Doonan and Anthony Nichols. **Director:** Roy Boulting. **A** Paul Soskin Production. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 93 minutes.

It was a neat piece of publicity work to exclude all publicity on this film on the grounds that it might prejudice voters. Though the press saw it on October 22nd, its West End run was postponed till after the Election. I cannot imagine many voters who had already decided to support Socialism being deflected by this film, which seems to suggest that elements willing to overthrow democracy are to be found within the Left-Wing Party.

The script, the joint work of Roy Boulting and Frank Harvey, makes use of such recent happenings as the sabotaging of munition ships, the disappearance of highly-placed members of the Foreign Office, the prosecution of University lecturers, the support given by certain Members of Parliament to "Freedom-Loving Associations", and weaves them into a story about a large-scale attempt to sabotage the country's power stations and a plot to seize power during the confusion which would ensue.

Like *Seven Days To Noon*, which it closely resembles, *High Treason* makes much use of the factual, detached, everyday face of London, though there is not in the latter film the same degree of tension aroused. This is mainly

because the threat is aimed, not so much at a place as at a way of life, and I suppose that we could suffer more composedly the disappearance of democracy than the disappearance of London. Perhaps that is what the film was trying to say. In any case, though we watch with interest the untangling of the skein which reveals the connection between the destruction of the munition ship and the attempt to blow up Battersea Power Station, we are not gripped as we were by the last half hour in *Seven Days To Noon*.

That is not to say that this is anything else than an extremely competent film. The production is as neat as could be desired. The script is compact and the acting is of that flawless, effortless kind that we have come to regard as typically English. This in spite of the fact that the leading player is an Irishman! The direction has the story under control at all points. The dialogue, though crisp enough, has one or two lapses, especially when the arch villain and the Scotland Yard Chief get together, but this does not detract too much from what is an essentially entertaining cops and robbers film.

Liam Redmond as the Yard man is excellent. It is the biggest part he has yet had on the screen and, as was the case with Barry Jones in *Seven Days To Noon*, proves that the actor trained in the theatre tradition is able to make rings round the "star" who is merely produced for the screen. The cast is exceptionally strong: Kenneth Griffith, Patric Doonan, Dora Bryan are but a few from an exceptionally good team.

A film to see and enjoy. Let us hope that when you see it you will not have voted for the wrong party!

V.



An excellent
performance
by Liam
Redmond

LADY GODIVA RIDES AGAIN

Starring: Dennis Price, John McCallum, Stanley Holloway and introducing Pauline Stroud.
Director: Frank Launder.
Distributors: British Lion.
Certificate: A. Category: A.
Running time: 90 minutes approximately.

No one need be made anxious by this film's title; the ladies' costumes are merely such as may be seen on any beach in the summer, whereas the moral is excellent, namely that (as the programme puts it) "pretty girls with no talent and no sense had better stay

at home", instead of going in for beauty competitions and trying to become film stars.

I do not believe in giving away the plot in a review, so I am not going to tell you any more of the story. Suffice it that the film is witty and entertaining and is rendered vastly amusing by making the cinema laugh at itself. Pauline Stroud is quite charming as the heroine, Dennis Price gives a superb performance, while Stanley Holloway, Gladys Henson, George Cole and Dora Bryan do all that is expected of them, which is a very great deal. The rest of the cast supports admirably.

T. C. F.

Trip

A Film
the Spirit

"Nativity", are two of the glories of our national collection. Though there is a difference of a few years in their ages, the three artists were contemporaries—late fifteenth century.

They represent three of the great schools of Italian painting, Mantegna of Padua, Crivelli of Venice and Botticelli of Florence. Padua is close to Venice and though there are characteristic differences between the two schools, it will serve our purpose if we emphasise only the greater differences between the artists of Venice and Florence. The Renaissance began in Florence and with it the city became the centre of

The Annunciation by Crivelli

All lovers of great pictorial art must be pleased that a beginning has been made to make the works of the great painters better known by the medium of the cinema. *Triptych* is the first of what we hope will be a long and continuous series. Our own National Gallery alone could provide excellent material for it. Perhaps it is not always appreciated that we have the most representative collection of the greatest pictorial art in the world in London, and that the National Gallery is neglected because its treasures are unknown.

Though the central panel of *Triptych*—"The Crucifixion" by Mantegna—is in the Louvre, the other panels, the one on the right Crivelli's "Annunciation" and the one on the left, Botticelli's

the whole artistic movement in Italy. By the time that movement reached Venice, to the excellence of form and line of the Florentine painters, the Venetians added colour. That does not mean to say that Leonardo and Botticelli were poor colourists, but that the Venetians were more excellent in that aspect of pictorial art—and in that aspect alone. Moreover, it can be said of them that they were painters and nothing more. The Florentines were not only painters, they were sculptors, architects, poets and even men of science.

It will also help us to understand *Triptych* if we appreciate that an artist may approach his subject in different ways. It may be to illustrate an event. That is the case if we consider the central panel by Mantegna. It



ych

h evokes Christmas

illustrates the fact of Christ's Crucifixion, but is wanting in Christian feeling and devotion, though the grief expressed by Our Lady and the Holy Women is very moving. Mantegna loved to depict the antique. His ideal was the old Imperial Rome and in consequence Roman soldiers, mounted and on foot, are given great prominence in his "Crucifixion". His figures too are not painted from life, for he preferred to study anatomy from the old classical statues which, he said, combined the excellence and grace of many perfect models. Towards the end of his life, he was known as "The Old Pagan".

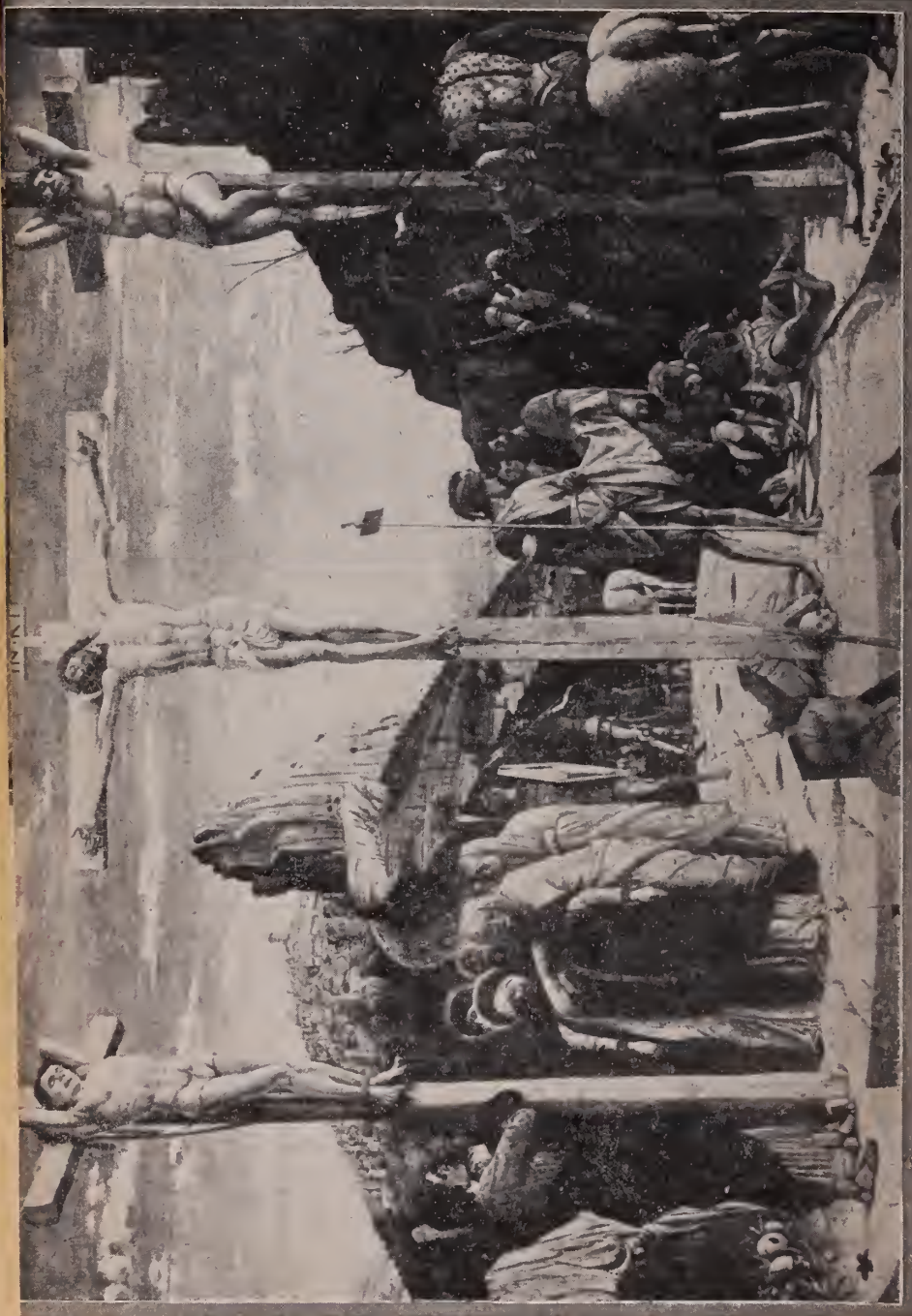
Crivelli's "Annunciation" shows an approach of a different kind by the artist. He records the fact of the Annunciation as if it had happened in his own time and in his own city. Our Blessed Lady is a person of high degree living in palatial surroundings and Nazareth has become the joyous, luscious and magnificent city of Venice. Was there ever such a gorgeous person as Crivelli's angel of the "Annunciation"? The inquisitive child peeping round the balustrade at the head of a flight of steps is in delightful contrast with the sedate senators aloof in the background. Notice, too, the little golden archway on the side of the main building, which admits the message from heaven that touches Our Lady's head. All this joyous



The Nativity by Botticelli

exuberance will be better understood when it is known that Crivelli was really commemorating something that actually happened in his day. The Pope of that time had granted certain rights of self-government to the town of Ascoli Piceno and the news of the privilege reached the town on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation. It was a joyous day, commemorated yearly by the citizens of Ascoli ever afterwards. They walked in procession to celebrate at the Franciscan church in the town and make merry in the afternoon.

What looks like a boy Bishop in the picture, next to the angel, is St. Eremidius, the Patron Saint of Ascoli. He supports a model of the town with his left hand and asks the angel to



Calvary by Mantegna

bless it. The printed inscription at the bottom of the picture, "Libertas Ecclesiastica", identifies the picture with the freedom granted by the Holy See.

The "Nativity" by Botticelli is again an example of yet another approach by the artist to his subject. The historic event of the Nativity of Christ is presented as a mystery, inciting the artist to express visibly the emotion the mystery calls up. He would have the on-looker too to share in his devotion. We are told that this is the most striking of all the Nativities; it is a comprehensive poem or hymn on the Nativity. It proclaims "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth Peace to men of good will". It follows with enthusiasm the story of the Nativity as recorded in St. Luke's Gospel, with incidents squeezed together and with an exactness that is unusual in pictures. In the sky, the heavens are opened and twelve angels holding branches of olive in their hands dance as they give glory to God. The rhythm and lines of the dancing angels are typical of much of Botticelli's work. In the middle of the picture stands the shed over the mouth of a rocky cave. Three angels on the roof of the shed crowned with olive hold olive branches and a book.

On the right side of the shed, an angel holding an olive branch introduces the shepherds crowned with olive and on the left another introduces the Magi similarly crowned. Olive grows by the stony pathways in front of the cave, and cave and shed are surrounded and enveloped by an olive wood. Everywhere that he could place it and plant it naturally, Botticelli insists on putting this symbol of peace. And, most significant of all, the peace on earth to follow the birth of Christ is shown by the three angels in the foreground embracing three men crowned with olive, whilst little demons nearby scurry away underground.

The little group, Our Lady, St. Joseph and the Holy Child, are painted with great understanding and devotion. The figure of Our Lady, larger than any other figure in the picture, is a return to medieval convention from the style of the Florentine Renaissance and another earlier convention is recalled by the lovely figure of the Infant Christ.

He touches His lip with His hand, which was taken to mean, "I am the Word made flesh". St. Joseph, too, shows the age that the old conventions gave him. He is old and tired. He rests his head on his arms and sleeps.

A mysterious inscription in Greek runs right across the top of the picture. Why Botticelli should say in Greek that he painted the picture in the year 1500, in troublesome times in Italy, is the mystery. Why put it into Greek? Some think that it was to hide the fact that he was a sympathiser with Savonarola, the Dominican Reformer. The latest scholarship thinks that there was no precise connection between the work of the two. The inscription, we are told, may possibly be an expression of Botticelli's own feelings and that probably the picture was painted for his own private devotion. However that may be, the picture now is ours. It should remind us that our first duty is to give glory to God and then, by loving our neighbour, promote peace on earth. In a special way, this message comes to us at Christmastide and it should receive a generous response from all men of good will.

P. R.

THE STOOGES

Starring: Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis.

Producer: Hal Wallis. **Director:**

Norman Taurog. A Paramount

Picture. *Certificate:* U. *Category:*

B. *Running time:* 98 minutes.

The plot is promising, that of a charming good-humoured man becoming conceited over his artistic achievements to the point of discarding his assistant ("The Stooges") in his variety turn only to find (and freely confess to his audience) that he cannot carry on alone. Unfortunately the "comic relief" introduced excels in quantity and lacks in quality, though it seemed vastly to amuse a small but highly noisy section of the audience at the press show. It struck me as being poor stuff. Definitely not my idea of satisfactory light entertainment.

T. C. F.



Alastair Sim as Scrooge

SCROOGE

Starring: Alastair Sim, Kathleen Harrison and Jack Warner, with Hermione Baddeley, George Cole, Rona Anderson, Mervyn Johns and John Charlesworth. **Producer and Director:** Brian Desmond Hurst. **Distributors:** Renown Pictures. **Certificate:** U. **Category:** C. **Running time:** 86 minutes.

George Minter, chief of Renown Pictures, having made a success of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and wisely allowed Miss Blandish and her orchids to fade from his publicity sheets, has

come to the conclusion that people want to escape the harassing weight of present-day existence by looking at films dealing with people as they lived in other days. This may well be true though it is not easy to understand why a consideration of the misery of former times should make us feel very happy today when it is so evident that the lessons of history have not been learnt.

Entertaining Christmas Fare

Be that as it may, *Scrooge*, freely adapted by Noel Langley from Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, is an entertaining piece of Christmas film fare and will surely be a favourite with the thousands

of children of all ages who dote on Dickens and enjoy having their withers wrung by sentimental stories. It is, we are promised, only the first of a series of similar Dickens transcriptions and if they all reach the same level of honest, unpretentious but efficient production, they will deserve well of the uncomplaining cinema public.

The story of the miserly Scrooge's conversion by means of a dream on Christmas Eve is too well known to require outlining here. It is, of course, no less improbable in celluloid than it is in print, but it is a pleasing fancy and far be it from us to carp at this forgiving time of the year. Let us, instead, echo Tiny Tim's immortal blessing, "God bless us all, every one!"

The film is really a vehicle for Alastair Sim's versatility.

Rounded Characterisation

As Scrooge, he passes through all stages of tight-fisted, inhuman contempt for his fellow man to boundless generosity. It is announced as his first dramatic comedy rôle. This is not quite accurate, for I remember early films in which Sim played dramatic parts, but it is certainly true that in *Scrooge* he gives his best and most rounded characterisation to date. An interesting novelty is the part given to the young Scrooge, played by George Cole. The physical resemblance between the two actors is strong and it was most enlightening to watch Alastair Sim coaching George Cole while they were shooting the film at Nettlefold. He was evidently anxious to make sure that the young and the old Scrooge developed logically as well as biologically.

Family Film

Michael Dolan, as the Ghost of Christmas Past, gives an interesting and thoughtful performance. Hermione Baddeley, as Mrs. Cratchit, Kathleen Harrison as Scrooge's housekeeper, Rona Anderson as Young Scrooge's sweetheart, are all worthy of notice. So also Miles Malleon as Old Joe and Ernest Thesiger as an undertaker.

Here is a family film which can safely be recommended for all lovers of Dickens and Christmas as he invented it.



Scrooge feigns anger as his clerk helps him on with his coat. But ghostly dreams have brought about his reformation



Alastair Sim as Scrooge and Michael Hordern as his dying partner, Marley



Scrooge visits the Royal Exchange (The Exchange was actually used for these scenes in the film)

THE BLUE VEIL

Starring: Jane Wyman, Charles Laughton, Joan Blondell, Richard Carlson, Agnes Moorehead, Cyril Cusack, Don Taylor and Audrey Totter. **Director:** Curtis Bernhardt. An R.K.O. Radio Picture. *Certificate: U.* *Category: C.* *Running time: 114 minutes.*

The blue veil used to be worn by children's nurses. This film tells of a young war widow whose baby dies and who becomes nurse to a long line of other people's children, on whom she lavishes the love which she would have given to her own. Many times she suffers the anguish of loss as the children are taken away from her for one reason or another, and she rejects several proposals of marriage in order to devote herself to her chosen career. A sad ending is averted by a chance encounter with one of her now grown-up charges and we leave her aged but



Jane Wyman in "The Blue Veil"

happy with two more delightful children.

The film is obviously a tear-jerker, but it is honestly so and provides us with some excellent acting from Jane Wyman. She is sincere and moving in her portrayal and makes no concession to glamour. A succession of unbecoming costumes are worn with complete conviction and one is vividly reminded of the ugly fashions of thirty years ago. It seems that she ages rather excessively from a possible 25 years in 1916 to a 55 years that looked more like 75. However, that does not diminish the worth of her performance. Good work is given also by Cyril Cusack as a whimsical toy merchant, and Everett Sloane as a humane District Attorney. Charles Laughton as a middle-aged widower is somewhat too reminiscent of the doting Henry VIII.

The story is from a French original and one remembers the film made some ten years ago with Gaby Morlay as the nurse. The American version is more sentimental but is nonetheless pleasing and avoids some obvious mawkishness which such a subject offers.



Jane Wyman and one of her "children"

PICKUP

Starring: Beverly Michaels, Hugo Haas, Allan Nixon, Howland Chamberlin, with Jo Carroll Dennison. **Producer** and **Director:** Hugo Haas. **Distributors:** Columbia. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 78 minutes.

The "gold digger", whom the middle-aged, rather simple widower picks up at a fun fair and subsequently marries is described in the synopsis as "tawdry but attractive". This film might have been both tawdry and unattractive, but it is saved by the fact that it is always intelligent and sometimes subtle. It contrives to hold the attention without playing on the emotions, in spite of two more or less attempted murders. Perhaps the fact that besides starring, producing and directing, Hugo Haas is part author of the screen play has given it a unity which some films lack.

There is a moral too: when you lose both your wife and your dog, get another dog.

Q.

MEET DANNY WILSON

Starring: Frank Sinatra, Shelley Winters, Alex Nicol, with Raymond Burr. **Producer:** Leonard Goldstein. **Director:** Joseph Pevney. **Distributors:** G.F.D. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** B. **Running time:** 88 minutes.

The cast is surprisingly small; only six players are named in the synopsis. The formula is singer-of-hit-tunes-snowballs-to-success-but-his-buddy-gets-the-girl combined with owner-of-night-club-is-relentless-killer. Both ingredients are from regular stock and do not mix particularly well.

Unless you are acclimatised to this sort of thing and susceptible to the yearnsome vocalism of Frank Sinatra, the film will seem merely tedious. If it is the only one at your cinema in Christmas Week, stay at home and play "Hunt the Slipper".

And may I take the annual opportunity of wishing a very merry

Christmas to those readers who have written to the editor or the office about my work in such a kind and friendly way?

Q.

ENCORE

Producer: Anthony Darnborough. **Directors:** Harold French, Pat Jackson, Anthony Pelissier. **Certificate:** A. **Category:** A. **Running time:** 89 minutes.

Those who enjoyed *Quartet* and *Trio* will welcome these three short films by the same author and with the same producer. There is something intensely human in these tales of Mr. Somerset Maugham, even though human nature is not always portrayed at its best.

"The Ant and the Grasshopper", about an idle, worthless and dissolute young scamp who ends by turning the tables on his industrious and respectable elder brother is a triumph for Nigel Patrick in the part of the scamp. The tale's gay cynicism carries it along so entertainingly that there is hardly time to realise that the moral behaviour of its characters leaves something to be desired: but it would be ungrateful to labour this point when all we are meant to do is to sit back and be amused. And we most certainly are.

In "Winter Cruise" a middle-aged spinster drives the crew and passengers of a cruising-steamer to desperation by deciding to be "the life and soul of the party" and talking incessantly. Miss Kay Walsh as the spinster is superb, and is ably supported by Noel Purcell and Ronald Squire as the ship's harassed captain and doctor, Jacques François as Pierre, the French steward who is deputed by the captain to make love to the spinster, is highly entertaining. The end is as unexpected as delightful. A charming film, the best of the three by a long shot.

About "Gigolo and Gigolette" I am not so happy: some of the characters in the story are so ruthless and brutal as to make it almost sordid. Also I do not think that Glynis Johns is quite successful as the girl who does a nightly trick-dive from a high ladder into a five-foot deep tank of water with burning petrol on its surface, and at length loses her nerve. It seemed to me that her performance was too

restrained and would have been all the better for a fit of first-class hysterics, for which no one could have blamed her in such trying circumstances. The honours in this third film undoubtedly go to Mary Merrill and Martin Miller in the parts of a retired vaudeville artist and her husband.

On the whole an excellent entertainment and not to be missed. But don't take impressionable youngsters who might be upset by the diving scene, not to mention some of the brutal characters referred to above.

T. C. F.

WHERE NO VULTURES FLY

Starring: Anthony Steel, Dinah Sheridan and Harold Warrender, with Meredith Edwards and William Simons. **Director:** Harry Watt. **A** Michael Balcon Production. *Certificate:* U. *Category:* C.

Those superior people who say, "I never go to the cinema, I prefer real life", will be challenged by this film which is a story that could be told in

no other medium. Only the camera could recount so graphically the events that take place in this lovely part of East Africa, with the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro presiding over the National Parks, where fabulous animals of many kinds live out their lives in safety.

It was a fit thing to set before the Royal Family for the Command Performance. They, like us, must be heartily sick of the artificial and morbid sagas that are so often presented for the entertainment of the public. No gangsters here, no psychiatrists, no sadistic fighters with a grudge against the world. Instead we are shown in most enchanting colours, the wild life of Kenya, animals of every shape and size and the efforts of the man who managed to set up the animal preserves and the difficulties he had to overcome before doing so. There is a thin thread of narrative dealing with the adventures of the man, his wife and young son which binds the picture together. Anthony Steel, Dinah Sheridan and little William Simons fit these parts adequately. Harold Warrender is a rather unlikely villain of the piece and Meredith Edwards a quite convincing shady character who traps animals for zoos and is not above a little bribery on the side.

The dialogue is somewhat stilted but otherwise the film has a refreshing atmosphere which will ensure its popularity with those who are tired of the average fictional film with its artificial characters and unpleasant undertones.

V.



Gwili Davies, the trapper, listens rather unhappily to Bob's views on the trapping of wild animals

A Reminder

Professor Dr. Bonfilus Knipping, O.F.M., D.A., will give an informal lecture to our priest film critics on December 11th, at the Challoner Club, at 4 p.m., on The Film Critic, The Christian Film Critic and The Priest Film Critic.

CONTINENTAL FILM

SOUS LE CIEL DE PARIS COULE LA SEINE

Starring: Denise Lambert, Jean Brochard, Sylvie, Marie France.
Scenario and Director: Julien Duvivier. English Commentary spoken by Anthony Bushell. Regina Filmsonor Production.
Certificate: A. **Category:** B.
Running time: 90 minutes approximately.

Picking some half-dozen very different people from all corners of sleeping Paris, Julien Duvivier brings twenty-four hours of their lives together in gradually lessening circles. This necessarily implies an episodic opening, switching from one scene or one story to another. The commentary in English is well spoken by Anthony

Bushell, but a little ineffective as the main connecting link between the characters, the story and Paris.

My general impression was one of pity and melancholy. This should not be so, as the star is Paris—Paris, bewitching by night, brilliant in sun and playing fountains, dreary in a strike, attractive in byways, attics and gardens. The photography excels and captivates.

But the memories that remain are haunting. The sad Mademoiselle Perrier (Sylvie), who spends from dawn till evening begging a mere sixty-four francs, to buy milk for her cats . . . and fails. And then there is the glum child-face of Colette (Marie France), aged six or seven, whose bad marks at school lead her to wander the streets rather than go home to mother's anger.

This is not Duvivier's best production, but the photography and one or two characters put it well ahead of many British and American films.

M.

SOME FILMS REVIEWED

NOTE. Inclusion in this list does not connote positive recommendation. Readers are reminded to refer to the full review when assessing a film.

Category A, indicates adults only; B, adults and adolescents; C, family audiences; D, particularly for children.

REVIEWED IN "FOCUS" (Vol. IV,
Nos. 10 and 11)

Across the Wide Missouri (C) (305)
An American in Paris (B) (278)
Appointment with Venus (C) (306)
Cyrano de Bergerac (B) (304)
David and Bathsheba (B) (302)
Decision Before Dawn (A) (278)
Detective Story (A) (307)
First Legion, The (C) (308)
Flying Leatherjackets (A) (301)
Francis Goes to the Races (276)
He Ran All the Way (A) (307)

Highway 301 (A) (307)
His Kind of Woman (A) (279)
I was a Communist Spy for the F.B.I. (A) (309)
Lady Pays Off, The (A) (302)
Lady with the Lamp, The (B) (303)
Magic Box, The (C) (301)
Mr. Belvedere Rings the Bell (B) (303)
Murder Inc. (A) (279)
People Against O'Hara, The (B) (303)
People Will Talk (A) (275)
Queen of the West (C) (276)
Rhubarb (B) (276)
Rommel—Desert Fox (C) (305)
Soldiers Three (B) (277)
The Frogmen (B) (274)
Valentino (A) (274)
Valley of Eagles (B) (277)
When Worlds Collide (A) (277)

CATHOLIC FILM INSTITUTE

AIMS AND OBJECTS

No. 4—*A Catholic Film Library*

The fourth of our aims and objects is an obvious and logical one to emphasize the necessity of promoting good motion pictures as the Encyclical requires. Just as a supply of good literature demands a library from which it may be circulated, so the supplying of good films requires the setting up of a centre from which films which are of interest to Catholics may be secured. There are, of course, other organisations, both Catholic and non-Catholic which handle films of interest to Catholic audiences, but there is need for a library which is a specialist centre in a way that other organisations, of their nature, cannot be. The library service which the Catholic Film Institute is in course of establishing is not intended primarily as a commercial enterprise, though, obviously, it is one of the necessary sources of income for the upkeep of the office itself. Its work is many sided, as much informational and consultative as an answer to the question: "What can I show to the Sodality next Sunday?" Such a library needs to be in touch with other film concerns up and down the country, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, in order to co-ordinate as usefully as possible, film activities which may be of service to the general Catholic community. In this there is no desire to establish a monopoly, even within the Catholic circle, for it is evident that there is need and room for more than one distributing centre, but it is also evident that an official organisation such as that of the Catholic Film Institute must be, must also be in a position to indicate to enquirers whatever it is they need to know about whatever may be of film interest from the Catholic point of view. To be able to do this we must be in a position to specialise.

Such a library will also have access to information about Catholic film activities in other countries and as the Catholic Film Institute is a component body of the International Catholic Film Office (O.C.I.C.) it is in an admirable position to be kept in touch with all

Catholic film activities which take place in the other countries connected with O.C.I.C. Films of value from the Catholic point of view are made by a number of groups in these countries and though it is not possible at our present state of penury to purchase copies of such films, at least it is a good thing to know about them and to be able to bring them to the knowledge of persons or organisations who may be interested.

The work of the library embraces two main departments. A certain number of films which have been made under the auspices of the C.F.I. take pride of place. This number is of necessity small at the moment but time and enthusiasm will remedy that. There is a great demand for Catholic films of all kinds but especially for films made explicitly to show the Catholic way of life in all its various expressions, religious, educational, social, recreational and artistic. There are at the moment very few films which can be said to have been made to measure for Catholics. Doubtless the newly resuscitated 16mm. section of the C.F.I. will help to fill that gap in course of time.

The other main part of our work involves the booking of films made by other organisations, both commercial and non-commercial, which Catholics wish to make use of. The greater part of Catholic film programmes are made up of entertainment films such as *Monsieur Vincent*, *Song of Bernadette*, *To Live In Peace*, *San Francisco*, etc., which we book for our clients from the firms which own them. Naturally we do not keep copies of such films in our own library; we arrange for them to be sent to the parish convent, college or school which is giving the film show. This service involves a lot of writing, telephoning, sending of telegrams and so on, but is all part of the job.

One thing which we have wanted to do for a long time is to compile a list

of titles which will include films of interest to Catholics from whatever source they may come. This is a big task and frankly we have not the personnel at the moment to devote to it. However, we are, little by little, gathering together titles which may be of use. One thing is quite clear at the moment; owing to the paucity of films which can be called truly Catholic, it is not possible for a film society to organise a monthly show which will consist entirely of such films. It is, however, quite possible to run a series of programmes which will include films of interest to Catholic audiences. Indeed, it is probably not a bad thing to bring certain non-Catholic films to the notice of our people and if, by discussion, a more alert and perceptive attitude towards such films can be developed, it will in the end contribute to the long term policy of all Catholic

film action, that of promoting good motion pictures.

One further service we wish to be able to offer, but which at the moment is entirely embryonic, is a library of reference books on the subject of film. We would like to be able to offer our members the opportunity of consulting standard works which will help them in their study of film. This will come about one day, but at the moment we have not the means to realise it. Our members, generous as always in their devotion to the cause which we have so much at heart, will perhaps help us to bring this sphere of our aspirations to fruition sooner than we think. In any case, modest as are our services at the moment, we are anxious to be of assistance to all who can use our help.

J. A. V. BURKE.

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157 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1

C.F.I. NOTES

Meeting of the 16mm. Section

It is proposed to hold a second meeting of those interested in the development of the 16mm. Section of the C.F.I. at Putney Park Studios, London, S.W.15, on January 8th and 9th. The two days will be devoted to the showing of selected films and to lectures and discussions on future plans for the 16mm. Section.

Those who care to take part in this conference are requested to send in their names as soon as possible to Miss Maureen Riley, 157 Victoria Street, London, S.W.7. Accommodation will be arranged if desired at a nearby convent and college.

Membership of the 16mm. Section

It is hoped that as many as possible of those who are interested in the possibilities of the 16mm. Section will join it. The annual subscription is set at 2s. 6d. in order to encourage those —the majority in these days of the New Austerity— who find expenses connected with their hobby already too heavy. It is not expected that such persons will necessarily be full members of the C.F.I. though there is, of course, no reason why they should not be. It is felt that, on the whole, the members of the C.F.I. are those who generously wish to assist by their subscriptions and donations an important work of Catholic Action quite apart from any consideration of what, at present, they can get out of it in return. On the other hand, those who are already caught up in the fascinating but very exacting enchantment of making their own amateur moving pictures will be able to make a valuable contribution in this way to Catholic Film Action, if they so desire.

Film Club at Boscombe

During the past three years, the Boscombe C.P.E.A. has been holding

regular monthly film shows in the parish hall so as to give members of the parish an opportunity of seeing various Catholic films which would otherwise not have been available to them. These shows have met with varied success, but on the whole the C.P.E.A. Committee has been well satisfied that the venture is worth while. It has therefore been decided to organise a film club as a section of the C.P.E.A., and this Club came into being in September. The aim of the Club is to promote among members good taste and discretion in film going, and it is proposed to hold a film show each month. A 16mm. projector has been purchased. It is also intended occasionally to hold talks on the educational and moral value of films viewed both at the Club and at the public cinemas. Membership is confined to members of the C.P.E.A. and the yearly subscription is 10s. 6d. Non-members may attend film shows and discussions on payment of one shilling.

The Club hopes that it will be possible to give shows in neighbouring parishes from time to time. Copies of *Focus* are sold at each film show, and a number of regular orders for this review have now been obtained.

Annual General Meeting

Members will have already been notified by post of the A.G.M., which is to take place on December 5th, at 8 p.m., at the Challoner Club, 61 Pont Street, London, S.W.3.

Phoenix House Limited has just published another book by Andrew Buchanan, D.Litt., Ph.D., F.R.S.A., entitled: "The Film in Education". This excellent publication will be reviewed in the January issue of *Focus*.

COVER PERSONALITY

RICHARD TODD

Thinking of the large number of stars that shoot across the screens of the world never to be seen again after their first and only flashing burst of publicity makes one ponder on the elusive quality which enables an actor like Richard Todd to steal the first picture he appears in and to keep the popularity he thus achieves with both public and producers. Less than three years ago an unknown actor with the Dundee Repertory Company, he has since then starred in several British films, has been to Hollywood where he made a film, yet to be seen in this country, *Lightning Strikes Twice*; has played opposite Marlene Dietrich and Jane Wyman in *Stage Fright*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock and is at present working on a film opposite Merle Oberon, directed by Victor Saville, entitled *Twenty-Four Hours of a Woman's Life*. (Doubtless a more compact title will be discovered before the film is sent out.) He has finished playing Robin Hood in the Walt Disney film of that name and Associated British Pathé, the company to whom he is under contract, are considering him for the title rôle in the film version of Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*.

It is evident that he has something which the directors want and judging by the wide variety of parts he has already appeared in he is able to deliver the goods. If only he can avoid being typed as a "heart throb" he may well climb to the top of the ladder which accommodates the quite small group of really first-class actors of stage and screen. It was his heart-warming, pathetic little Scottish soldier in *The Hasty Heart* which first caught and held the attention of the public though

he had already shown promise of unusual ability in his part as the condemned man in *For Them That Trespass*. In *Portrait of Clare*, in which he played opposite Margaret Johnson, his part was more conventional but still sufficiently individual to be noticed. In *Stage Fright* he was rather overshadowed by the galaxy of talent that peopled that not very good film. Nevertheless, whatever his part he manages to leave something in the memory of the beholder in addition to the good looks which are both an asset and a danger for a man who wants to be a real actor for the screen.

JOHN VINCENT.

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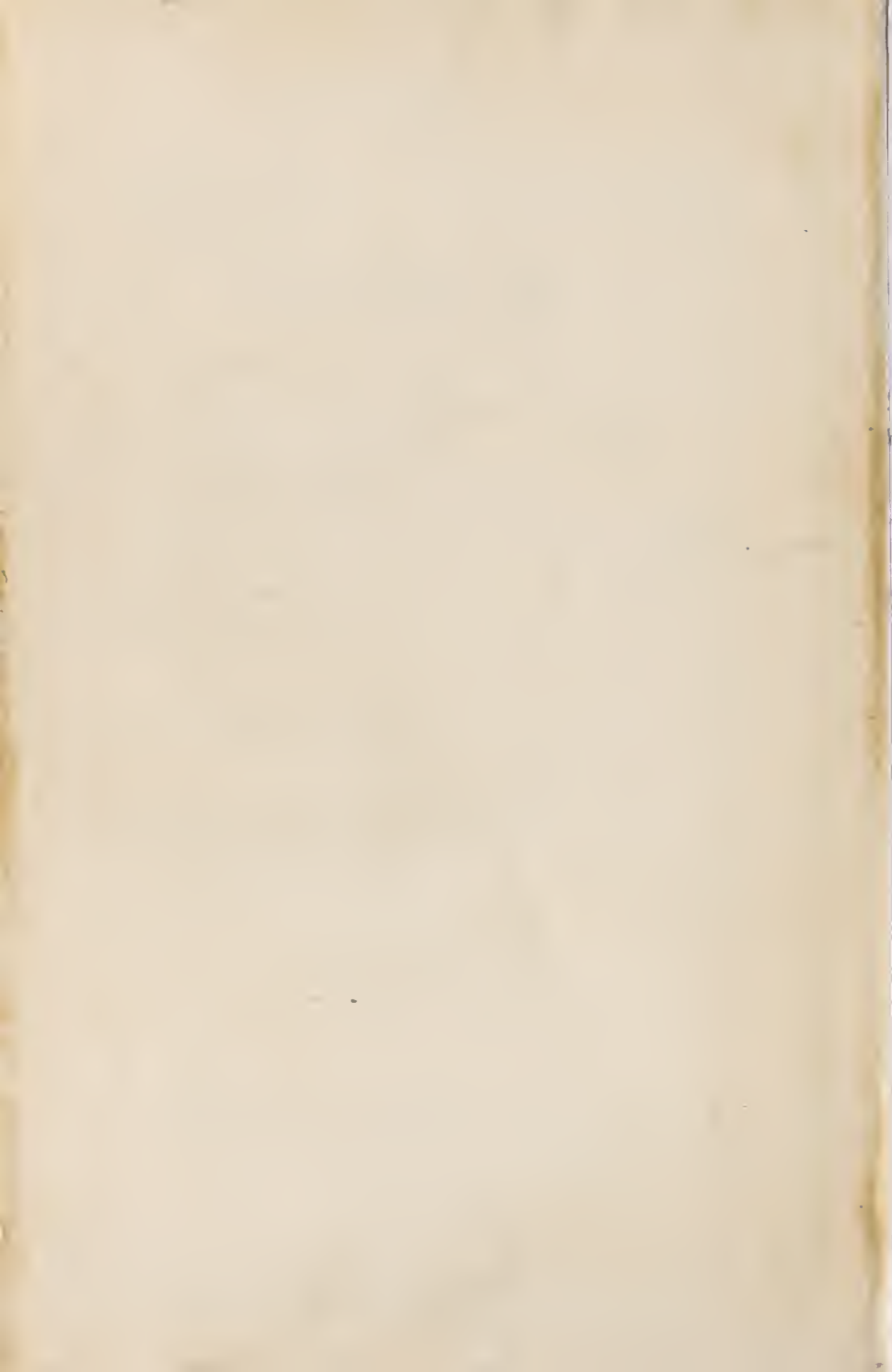
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